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Medieval French Literature**

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# Foreword

This volume of essays had its origin in a symposium on Medieval French Literature held October 8-10, 1970, at the University of Kansas in Lawrence. The symposium included the presentation and discussion of six papers, as well as a production of *Lo Jutgamen general*, a fifteenth-century Provençal Last Judgment play, directed by Professor Moshé Lazar.

Contributors have had the opportunity to revise their papers as they wish for publication; in substance, however, all the essays except that of Professor J. Neale Carman are printed as they were read at Lawrence. The article which Professor Carman offers here is a substitution for his paper "The Patrons and Planners of the Pseudo-Map Cycle," which is included in a longer work, not yet published, "On the Historico-Geographic Background of the Pseudo-Map Cycle of Arthurian Romance."

The lack of a specific, unifying theme for the conference and for this collection did not seem to us to constitute a serious problem; on the contrary, we welcomed the diversity of subjects and critical approaches. This volume is then a kind of *recueil factice*, in which the contributors have been left free to develop the subjects which interested them according to methods which were theirs. It is to be hoped that variety is also the spice of scholarship.

I am happy to acknowledge my debt to the following persons for their aid and advice in the planning of the symposium or the production of this volume: Professor J. Theodore Johnson, Jr., who at the time of the symposium was Chairman of the Department of French and Italian; Mr. James Nabors, of the University's Division of Continuing Education; Miss Alexandra Mason, Special Collections Librarian; my colleagues on the conference committee: Professors Barbara Craig and David Dinneen, Mrs. Caroline Pensec, Mr. Gregg Lacy, and Mr. Walter Robson; Professor Edward Ruhe, Mr. James Helyar and the members of the Humanistic Series editorial committee.

NJL

# Satan and Notre Dame: Characters in a Popular Scenario

MOSHÉ LAZAR

The following study treats two stereotyped characters, Satan and Notre Dame, who give to the poetry and the drama in which they evolve a particular orientation, immediately recognizable to its readers and spectators.<sup>1</sup> These antagonists possess, independent of the text which gives them being and animates them as conflicting characters, a sharply defined identity and permanent attributes. In many ways, they resemble the masks of early comedy or of the "commedia dell'arte": if they are transformed and enriched in the course of generations, it is within the framework of certain fixed structures. Their authors scarcely need to invent original stories and biographies in order to make them appealing and interesting to the public. The audience's awareness of their attributes and their possibilities make it unnecessary for the poets and dramatists to overturn the traditional structures of the basic scenario and of the customary outcome; the spectators require a simple variation, which still permits them to enjoy at each new spectacle the same elementary pleasure of *seeing one of the characters win the game and the other lose it*; the fact that there is never any question about who will win or lose detracts not at all from the quality of the presentation and the intensity of the audience's participation. What is important is not the scenario itself but the way it is worked out and played; attention and admiration depend less on the *what* than on the *how*. Nor is it necessary to explain the characters' antecedents or to present in detail the situation in which the antagonists confront each other; by the very fact of meeting in the same story or on the same stage, Satan and Notre Dame create a situation which is immediately comprehensible: *the opposition of good and evil forces, with the victory of one and the defeat of the other predictable even before the conflict between them begins*. Although the outcome is apparent from the beginning, the spectacle retains all its meaning and interest while developing its initial premises. The relationship which exists between these two characters and the pre-established scenario (somewhat similar to that which exists between the tragic hero and his fate) not only permits the *good* character to benefit from supernatural aid to overcome obstacles but moreover imparts to the acts and words of the *evil* one—whose defeat is always present in silhouette—a dimension which, without being necessarily tragic, is not lacking in irony.

The basic scenario includes, moreover, other elementary premises: a) the *good* character, that is, the future winner, should be imbued with all the virtues, must never find himself lacking in physical resources or arguments, should be sympathetic; b) the *evil* one, who will eventually be defeated, must be deprived and despicable, powerful and cunning, antipathetic or, failing that, capable of inspiring a disconcerting sympathy, vain and

blustering, to the point of resembling a *miles gloriosus*; c) the more the evil character is presented as strong and crafty, the greater will be his opponent's victory and the more ludicrous will be his own defeat;<sup>2</sup> d) "might makes right": even when right is not on the side of the good character, the latter must triumph; thus the end justifies the means; e) "the deceiver deceived": wiles and low blows are permitted for the one destined to defeat the enemy; if the latter succeeds in deceiving others for a time (as do Satan and the Antichrist) he is masterfully duped in his own turn; f) "crime does not pay," or the moral of the story: the victory of the good character over the evil one, while inevitable, contributes to the didactic infrastructure of the story or drama in two ways: it teaches that every sinner can be saved if he has faith in the representative of Good and, on the other hand, that one cannot serve two masters; it teaches also that if the service rendered to the evil master can offer certain pleasures and advantages, they are entirely ephemeral and bring about the death of the servant's body and soul on Judgment Day.

It is in the context of these general considerations that we wish to study Satan and Notre Dame, two characters in a didactic scenario which must have enraptured the medieval public in the same way that scenarios of an identical type (essentially based on the opposition between *hero* and *traitor*, *virtue* and *vice*, *sheriff* and *gangster*) have always fascinated the masses and retain their popular appeal even today. The important place which Satan and Notre Dame, as representatives of a supernatural world, hold in the theology and the minds of the Middle Ages intensifies the role they play as dramatic characters of a Miracle or Mystery play. They appear as the archetypes of Good and Evil in the traditional scenario which opposes the servants of the law and the outlaws.

On the model of Jesus *mediator* and conqueror of Hell, the theology and the mariological cult of the Middle Ages fashioned the omnipotent role of Mary as *mater mediatrix* and as conqueror of Satan.<sup>3</sup> The poetic and dramatic "Miracles" in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries show Notre Dame essentially occupied in combatting the Devil in order to save from his clutches those who, by choice or by force, have abandoned her service for that of the Evil One. Sometimes she saves them in spite of themselves, but in most cases she comes to their aid when they implore her after recognizing their sins or when they are the innocent victims of Satan. Taking up the role of Jesus in the struggle against the Prince of Darkness, Mary finds Satan, the right arm of Lucifer, on a level with her. Both Mary and Satan, being "nearer," "more familiar," and "more human" than God and Lucifer, were better suited than their Masters to represent visually and dramatically the struggle between Good and Evil. Both are intermediaries. Moreover, they both have human delegates on earth: Mary has as ministers bishops, saints, and icons; Satan's ambassadors are Jews, rebels and temptations.

Theatrically speaking, Mary intervenes as a *dea ex machina*: she puts an end to the adversary's actions, much to the spectators' joy at seeing the reward of the good character and the punishment of the bad, the total defeat

of the Enemy. Before her arrival the interest of the public is sustained by the spectacular aspects of the play, the highly colored portrait of the sinner, the presentation of perverse actions, temptations, crimes, games, tavern scenes; Mary's intervention is thus less scenic and spectacular than didactic, since the "entertainment" is more or less concluded by the time she arrives. When Notre Dame does not intervene as a *dea ex machina*, she serves various functions before affirming her omnipotence in the conclusion: she takes initiatives, pleads, sermonizes, performs cures and miracles, devises stratagems, combats the devils and Hell. By her presence and her actions Notre Dame constructs the didactic infrastructure of the play.

As for Satan and the agents of Evil, they contribute not only to the theological and moral significance of the play but essentially to the realistic portrayal of customs, to the scenic actions and the comic and grotesque elements of the spectacle. Satan too considers himself omnipotent, capable of conquering Heaven, the world, and the saints; he bends every effort and makes use of all possible disguises to accomplish his ends. But the more blustering and agitated this braggart—the *miles gloriosus*—becomes, the more painful is his defeat: he is beaten on earth and in Hell.<sup>4</sup> He refuses to accept the pre-established scenario and the idea that "the chips are down." If he is cunning and strong, he is nonetheless stupid and naive in spite of himself; he is duped by his victims, who, when they so desire, have Notre Dame as protectress. Inevitably, because his defeat is prepared in advance by the scenario, he is the eternal *dummteufel* of the "divine comedy."

A certain number of texts, in the limited framework of this study, will serve to illustrate the general considerations which we have just outlined. Some interesting examples are to be found in Gautier de Coinci's *Miracles de Notre Dame*<sup>5</sup> and in the *Miracles de Notre Dame par Personnages*;<sup>6</sup> Rutebeuf's *Miracle de Theophile*<sup>7</sup> and *L'Advocacie Notre-Dame*<sup>8</sup> will complete the tableau.

Satan's defying Notre Dame and being ultimately "check-mated" by her provide the central theme of most of Gautier de Coinci's dramatic poems. Thus, in *Dou Jovenel que li dyables ravi, mais il ne le pot tenir contre Notre Dame*, a man and his wife, after rearing several children, decide to make a vow of chastity to the Virgin. However, the Devil tempts the husband and arouses him to break his vow. In addition, the wife, equally misguided, curses her future offspring and consecrates it to the Devil. A son is born; when he is twelve, the Devil appears to the mother, reminds her of her promise, and indicates his intention to claim the son in three years. The youth departs for the Holy Land to seek his salvation. A hermit takes him under his protection and implores the aid of the Virgin. On the appointed day, the Devil tries to carry off his "possession," but Notre Dame arrives *in extremis*, forcing the shamed and confounded Devil to flee.

In the story *De un moigne que Notre Dame delivra dou Dyable*, Satan assumes three different forms to corrupt a monk who is entirely devoted to the Virgin. This pious monk has however one fault: he loves drink, and Satan knows it. One evening, when he is drunk, the Devil appears before him

in the form of a bull and prepares to gore him; Notre Dame saves her servant. Later, the Devil returns transformed into a mad dog; Mary protects the monk and threatens to punish the Devil if he dares return a third time. Satan accepts the challenge and appears this time as a lion. Notre Dame, before seizing a rod to beat the Devil, threatens to chain him forever in Hell if he reappears again.<sup>9</sup>

Besides the juridical or physical confrontation with the Devil, Notre Dame has other methods of saving her servants and routing the Evil One. She uses the premonitory dream and suspense in the *Miracle D'une nonain qui vaut pechier, mais Nostre Dame l'en delivra*: Satan instills in a young nun's heart a desire for love and for escape from the convent in the company of a knight.<sup>10</sup> On the night of the escape, the nun finds herself plunged into a deep lethargy. This is Notre Dame's first intervention. To frighten the nun and to give her an awareness of her state of sin, Mary presents in a dream a horrible picture of the infernal torments awaiting her. Two devils lead her away and deposit her before the "Mouth of Hell"; she witnesses the tortures of the damned; then, other devils try to lead her into the pit. Terror-stricken, the nun repents and implores the Virgin to save her. Notre Dame, both to teach the nun an unforgettable lesson and to assert her own authority, permits the devils to continue their work; she intervenes only at the last minute and drives them away. The nun awakens at that point; she refuses to leave with the knight and henceforth will live only for divine love.

In his capacity as seducer and schemer, Satan plays a large role in the *Miracle De une noble fame de Rome*: jealous of the piety of a noble and holy woman in Rome, the Devil leads her into an incestuous love with her son; from this union is born a child which the mother immediately and secretly kills. The Devil can hardly bear the silence surrounding the crime; thus he transforms himself into an eloquent *maître d'école* in order to prosecute his victim before the Emperor; he constructs his accusation in the manner of an attorney (Koenig, II, 138). The lady admits her crime to her confessor and invokes the protection of Notre Dame. When she is to appear before the tribunal to answer the charges, Mary accompanies her as her lawyer. Satan, unable to endure the dazzling lucidity of the Virgin, takes flight:

Je n'os atendre ceste fame  
Car par la main la tient la dame  
De cui Diex volt faire sa mere.  
Assez est plus luisanz et clere  
Que solauz n'est, ce m'est avis.  
La grans clartez de son cler vis  
M'a ja les ieus toz esbloez.<sup>11</sup>

Even though it was Satan who first plotted the perfect crime and had it executed by this noble woman of Rome, there is no doubt that she remains a criminal before the law of men and God. But that matters little. Notre Dame *must* win her case and save her servant. Before disappearing the Devil

bitterly laments his helplessness and is enraged at losing the contest when he is right:

Vers li n'ai force ne pooir,  
Ainz la dout tant ne l'os veoir.  
Pour li sui *mas* et amuïs.<sup>12</sup>

In other Miracles the confrontation between Mary and Satan is presented in a different frame—that of the *disputatio*. The ill-fated actions of the Devils are followed by a debate which opposes an angel or a saint to Satan; the discussion bears on the right of possession of a soul. Mary intervenes as arbiter, and of course Satan never wins. He complains of Notre Dame's partiality,<sup>13</sup> prefers to have God as arbiter, and declares that if Mary continues to save sinners that way, "Hell will be depopulated."<sup>14</sup> This plot recurs in three Miracles by Gautier de Coinci: *De celui qui se tua par l'amonestement dou dyable* (the story of a pilgrim to whom Satan appears transformed into Saint Jacques and convinces him to commit suicide); *Du moine ressuscité par Nostre-Dame* (a monk tempted by the Devil leaves his monastery at night for sinful purposes, but one evening he falls in a river and drowns); *Dou chevalier a cui la volenté fu conteé por fait* (a knight, having repented of his disordered life, decides to build an abbey in honor of the Virgin but dies without confession before completing his project). These texts, by introducing into the concluding scene a juridical debate before a heavenly tribunal, add to the basic scheme of the traditional scenario the possibility of developing suspense; such suspense, based on the verbal opposition between the prosecution and the defense, permits the display of virtuosity on both sides and satisfies the public taste for the oratorical jousts of the famous *chicaniers*.<sup>15</sup>

The dramatized Miracles of the fourteenth century develop and intensify the premises and the possibilities of the scenario we have just analyzed. By the use of scenes of deviltries they add to the central action the comic and *guignolesque* dimension of the spectacle. Except for the theological-didactic infrastructure, these plays owe more to the farce, the fabliau, the comedy of manners, or the anecdote, than to the religious drama. These dramatized Miracles, moreover, surround Satan and Notre Dame by their subordinates, thus accenting the opposition between two enemy camps: the noble and royal court of Mary, Satan's horrible and grotesque band.

In the *Miracle de l'enfant donné au dyable*, inspired by Gautier de Coinci,<sup>16</sup> a great, spectacular scene ends the play: Mary and Satan argue for the child's soul. The Devil, sure of himself and of his law, agrees to discuss the case before Christ the Judge. The latter, while trying to appear impartial, permits Notre Dame not only to hold the floor longer but to use tactics which involve aggression and blackmail. On the pretext of wanting to examine the sealed letter presented by the prosecution (a document proving the child's desertion by the mother), Notre Dame seizes the document and tears it to pieces. The Devils' protest gains them only a casuistic response from the Judge. To tilt the scale definitively in her favor, Notre Dame does not hesitate to use the ultimate means: the verbal and physical *Planctus* of

the "Mother of God"; weeping, wailing, tearing her robe, and baring her breasts, Notre Dame tortures her Son-Judge emotionally and directly influences his verdict and the spectators' opinion.<sup>17</sup> After this demonstration, which foreshadows the final verdict, it only remains for the Devil to ruminate about his defeat, and he does so like a lawyer whose case is unjustly dismissed.

Encor sommes nous plus coquart  
De nous en estre sur Dieu mis.  
Il nous est touz jours ennemis;  
Pour sa mère n'en ose el faire:  
Si lui faisoit riens de contraire,  
Il seroit batuz au retour.<sup>18</sup>

The ironic note which accompanies this expression of bitterness (the Son dominated by the Mother and fearing her punishment!) underscores once again, at the play's end, that the outcome is present in the beginning of the scenario, that the chips have always been down in the great theatre of the world, that in the divine chess game *the white Queen inevitably checkmates the black King*.<sup>19</sup>

The situation is not essentially different in the *Miracle de Pierre le Changeur*; in a dream, Pierre attends his trial in Heaven and sees how Notre Dame and Satan vie for possession of his soul. The accusation pronounced by the Devil presents a man burdened with sins:

. . . La gist un homme:  
Quel? Tel que dix chevaux a somme  
Ne pourroient pas, ce sachiez,  
Porter le quart de ses pechiez,  
Non le quint, ce sachiez de voir.  
(Paris-Robert, VI, 244-45, vss. 433-37)

He has been a glutton and a drunkard since his youth, a miser and a usurer, and, since the age of twenty, a seducer and a debauchee:

Comment usa il sa jonnese?  
Comment? quoy qu'il eust richesse,  
Si fu le plus de ses deduiz  
Aler de nuiz rompre les huiz  
A mariées et pucelles  
Et de les efforcer, et celles  
Qui de riens li contredisoient  
En l'eure batues estoient.  
(Paris-Robert, VI, 245, vss. 447-54)

He is a perfect Don Juan who clearly deserves Hell. But Mary, the infallible advocate, intervenes at the bidding of Pierre's guardian angel. Her defense consists essentially of disturbing and unsettling her Son. And, to the great joy

of the spectators, she succeeds amazingly. The chagrin of the devils is expressed in the following dialogue:

*Premier Dyable:*

Touz jours nous jeu Dieu soubz chappe,  
Qui nous fait si d'un a un b,  
Que touz jours nous sommes gabé  
Et perdons tout.

*Deuxiesme Dyable:*

Esté avons fol et estout  
De nous en estre sur li mis,  
Car touz jours nous est ennemis,  
Quant sa mère vient a l'afaire;  
Autrement ne l'oseroit faire,  
Et s'il le faisoit, abatus  
Seroit de sa mère et batuz

Dessus ses fesses. (Paris-Robert, VI, 249, vss. 578-89)

To forget their resentment, the devils are already planning the next plot of seduction and corruption; they have no time to lose, since they cannot appear empty-handed before Lucifer with impunity, and because they have to bend their efforts to "repopulate" Hell.

Such are the rules of the game. It will be noted moreover that the terms *jeu* and *jouer*, *gaber* and *mater* recur frequently in the speech of the devils. Thus, for example, in the *Miracle de la marquise de la Gaudine*, the Devil, enraged at his inability to seduce the marquise's wife, exclaims:

Elle a le cuer trop fort espris  
De requérir la mère Dieu.  
Mais je li pance d'un tel *jeu*  
A *jouer* qui fort li nuira!

(Paris-Robert, II, 131, vss. 238-41)

We must think in terms of didactic and spectacular theatre, of popular stage performances, in order to judge correctly these plays which use the simplest devices and the technique of the Grand Guignol to celebrate the victory of Good over Evil, of Notre Dame over Satan.<sup>20</sup>

The poetic and dramatic versions of the legend of Théophile,<sup>21</sup> while accepting the main premises of the traditional scenario, present problems within a more complex framework, and the confrontation between Mary and Satan acquires, in addition to a more distinct metaphysical dimension, a character which is progressively more human and psychological. It is not only this confrontation in itself which is important but the place where it is organized, developed, and resolved: the soul of Théophile. This is particularly true in Rutebeuf's dramatic version, concise in the extreme, precise in the use of scenic resources, effective in the choice of words and metaphors. Around Théophile, who occupies the center of the drama and the stage, the



representatives of Good are located to his right (Notre Dame and the Bishop), the agents of Evil at his left (the Devil and the Jew). The scene thus conceived, physically and metaphorically, represents a scale; the soul of Théophile is the center of balance between the possibilities on the right side and on the left; he is and will remain the arbiter of his existence: first rejecting the Master of Good in an act of revolt, then signing the pact with the Devil and becoming his liegeman, finally returning to religious discipline and absolute devotion. To lean toward the side of Evil, it is sufficient for him, of course, to surrender to the despair which gnaws his thwarted heart; to avenge himself and to regain his fame and fortune, he must have recourse to the Jew and to his master Satan. To be able to return to the divine order, it is not enough to pray and repent; Notre Dame must save him from Satan's clutches and reclaim the pact. He is thus not absolutely the only arbiter of his destiny, but it is only he who must choose, at each crossroads in his life, between divine grace and satanic grace. He can never serve two masters at the same time. If he serves one, he inevitably loses the other. But the irony of the play, as in the earlier texts using the same scenario, is that Théophile thinks that he has found a Master in Satan, whereas the latter is no more powerful than a servant. In choosing Satan, he not only loses God, but he gains nothing in return. He is more lonely than ever. He knows the true misery of man without God. This situation is perfectly understood by Théophile and is expressed in the center of the drama:

Or n'ai-je remanence ne en ciel ne en terre.

Ha! las, *ou est li lieus que me puisse soufferre?*

Enfers ne me plest pas ou je me voil offerre;

Paradis n'est pas miens, que j'ai au Seignor guerre.<sup>22</sup>

Rutebeuf's play, contrary to the preceding versions, opens *in medias res*, with a monologue in which Théophile expresses his chagrin, his anger, and his despair. He has been mistreated by the bishop ("Bien m'a dit li évesque: Eschac! / Et m'a rendu maté en l'angle"), and God has remained silent and has not intervened. He first thinks of committing suicide (vs. 21), then thinks of avenging himself on God (vss. 22-23). But how can one make war on God, except by becoming the Devil's ally? He is thus going to play the rebel baron and change liege-lords. He himself makes this decision, and Salatin functions only as an intermediary between him and the Devil (vss. 44-93). Théophile's second monologue (vss. 101-143) expresses his awareness of the gravity of the choice he has just made, but his choice is irrevocable. Only then does he become the Devil's liegeman. Having regained his prestige and property, Théophile lives several years as a powerful and vain man; Rutebeuf tells us this in a few lines. Théophile is feared, to be sure, but not respected and loved. One day he realizes that he possesses nothing—neither happiness on earth nor eternal life in the Hereafter. He is again tormented by despair and is on the brink of madness;<sup>23</sup> once again he thinks of suicide. He no longer dares pray to God or his Saints (vss. 404, 428) or to the Virgin Mary (vss. 409, 429). Of all the traps laid by Satan, the most subtle and the most

dangerous is that of absolute despair. But it is in the darkest part of this night within him that the light suddenly appears: Théophile has a surge of faith and loses himself in prayer to the Virgin and in contrition. Although she does not respond, he swears not to leave the chapel, not to cease praying. He who at the beginning of the play lamented the unjust silence of God, now accepts the silence of Notre Dame with humility. It is only then that Mary intervenes in his behalf, proceeds to Hell and snatches the pact from Satan's hands.

In this dramatic treatment of the Théophile legend, the two traditional characters of the popular scenario are weakened and relegated to the extremities of the stage in favor of the central character, the human being. What was external action is here internalized. What was translated by a scenic and spectacular *disputatio* is here greatly reduced and replaced by a series of altercations within the hero's soul, whence the large number of introspective monologues in this play. We are not dealing here with the familiar confrontation between two opposed external forces, between a provocative agent and the *mater mediatrix*, between a prosecutor and a defense lawyer, but rather with the questionings of a human being confronted with the problem of justice and injustice in the world, with the question of salvation and damnation. It is to be noted, moreover, that *faith* is not conceived of as a mystic impulse, but rather as a matter of pragmatic politics; a characteristic expression in this regard recurs several times in the play: "*nuire et aider.*" You must cling to those who can help you and combat those who can harm you. The bishop has been detrimental to Théophile and God did not come to his aid; allying himself with the Devil, he says of God that He can no longer "help him or hinder him." Satan and the Jew are going to help him in order to hinder God; discovering that the Devil's aid is only an illusion and is injurious to him in the long term, he calls on Mary, who really can help him. As within the social and political system of feudalism (and within every political system) one must know how to choose one's liege-lord, one must recognize immediately where the real power lies. From this point of view, of course, Théophile is in the wrong and has played badly. It is in this sense that our poet expresses himself also in his *Ave Maria Rutebeuf*:

Fols est qui en toi ne se fie,  
 . . . . .  
 Fols est cil qui pense autre part  
 Et plus est fols qui se depart  
 De vostre accorde.

The folly consists of abandoning that one who possesses eternal joy for another who can procure only ephemeral satisfactions. God and Notre Dame represent the true power and the greatest force; it is thus unreasonable to opt for the charlatan's mirages. This is the lesson which Théophile draws from his experience when he confesses before the bishop, and he wants to make this lesson known to his fellow men:

Qu'autre gent n'en soit deceüe  
Qui n'ont encore aperceüe  
Tel tricherie. (Frank, vss. 629-31)

In the *Miracle de Théophile*, the direct confrontation between Satan and Notre Dame was reduced. In the *Advocacie Notre-Dame* the altercation between the two characters is the framework and the entire content of the dramatic poem. The fact that a *scène-à-faire* has become a complete play shows clearly the popularity of the genre. Satan and Notre Dame are presented here as two litigants, as two specialists in chicanery, experienced in all the techniques of judicial procedure. As we will see, the style and the manoeuvres of the two antagonists are far from identical; on the other hand, in this *disputatio*, which contains several elements of suspense, it is not Satan who ought to lose the contest, and yet, according to the rules of the scenario, he is duped, ridiculed, to the great pleasure of the celestial jury and of the public.

Satan, elected attorney general by the devils, presents himself before Christ the Judge to institute proceedings against mankind. He asks Him to remain impartial and does not hesitate to express his fears and doubts:

Tu es de justice le chief,  
Justice vail; tu es Justice,  
Fei la moy. N'est-ce ton office?  
Tu ne m'ez pas mout debonnere . . . .<sup>24</sup>

Christ wants to set the trial date for Good Friday; Satan, as a good jurist, replies that sentences passed on that day are considered void (vss. 387-88), but he has to accept the Judge's decision. At dawn on Holy Friday, Satan is the first one present in court. He is made to wait all day, since no one appears in defense of mankind. Satan becomes enraged: "Halas! où est Justice alée / Quant es cyex a peine la treuve?" (vss. 490-91). The trial is adjourned until the following day. Satan protests again, is insulted by the Judge and expelled from Paradise. Suspense is first created by two parallel meetings: on one hand, the assembly of saints; on the other, the council of devils. At the end, Notre Dame appears to defend humanity. Now the real spectacle is going to begin: the great oratorical joust between the *bonne Advocate* and the *mal advocat*.

Satan begins first by questioning the legality and the impartiality of the tribunal, establishing before the jury and the public the obvious fact that the defense is represented by the Judge's mother, which is not acceptable, and by a woman, which is contrary to law:

Gardez ne fêtez chose neuve  
Et que sanc et char ne vous meuve.  
. . . . .  
Ta mère ne doit estre oye  
En fêt qui soit d'advocacie.  
Adverti toy que Droit commande

Fame ne peut fère demande  
N'estre pour autre.

Tu es son filz, elle est ta mère:  
Le soupechon est tout voiable!

(vss. 807, 857-61, 864-65)

Without giving the Judge time to reply, Mary pleads her cause: in certain cases, a woman can witness; to be sure, she is the Mother of the Judge, but she asks that she be considered simply as a woman by the tribunal. And while Satan always takes care to speak courteously, Notre Dame inveighs against him in her speech and abuses him constantly: *mauvese beste, desloial procuratour, fel desloial parjuré, fel enfumé, fel advocat ort, bedel truant, garson paunt, deputaire*, etc. Knowing herself to be favored by the Judge, she takes advantage of this to speak at great length, whereas she often interrupts Satan's discourse. The latter is disgusted:

Mout s'est or prise à beau mestier,  
A noisier et à jargonner;  
Nul ne peut un soul mot sonner,  
Fors lie, en tout cest consistoire.

(vss. 1120-23)

After a series of rebuffs, Satan once again asks the Judge not to let himself be guided by prejudice; should he be silenced or thrown out of the tribunal, the Judge nevertheless ought not remain silent but should render proper justice:

Entent moy, père de justice,  
Ne me soiez pas tant contrère;  
Fey com bons juges doivent fère.

And it is again Mary who replies in place of the Judge.

Losing ground in the logical argumentation, Notre Dame is going to play the game's great trump: the *Planctus Mariae*! In a long scene, the text presents her to us as "une femme fragile," anguished, wringing her hands, tearing her robe, baring her breasts, trembling, pale, on her knees, sighing, sobbing (vss. 1391-1414), recalling her suffering (vss. 1427-72), asking her Son to choose between her and Satan (vss. 1502-04):

S'au Déable plus obéis  
Qu'a ta mère, n'à sa partie,  
Oste moy du livre de vie!

How could the Son, the Judge, resist this emotional pressure? He thus repulses Satan, who, for the first time, answers neither the Judge nor Mary. Turning toward God the Father, he protests this parody of justice. In the continuation of the debate, constantly interrupted by Mary's abusive tirades against Satan, God the Father intervenes three times against Notre Dame

and asks her not only to listen to the other side but also to find more logical and convincing responses to refute the prosecution's charges (vss. 1988-91, 2013-17, 2130-34). Another time, Mary is at a loss for a reply; her Son makes her understand by a wink what she should respond. The game is obviously fixed, but no one protests, neither the jury nor of course the public. Satan, justifiably, bursts out:

Halas! or est il bien voiable  
 Que je ne disoie que voir.  
 Or peut l'en bien apercevoir  
 Que ce n'est mie bele druge  
 De recevoir la mère au juge  
 A estre advocat contre sey.  
 Nulle rèsou dire ne sçey,  
 Ne proposer si grant merveille,  
 Que le juge ne la conseille;  
*Se nous plèdisson per à per,*  
*Elle ne péust eschauffer . . .* (vss. 2066-76)

Mary, for want of convincing arguments, again takes up the theme of the *Planctus* and her attitude of the anguished mother. Satan has no other choice but to resign himself to this flagrant injustice, but before leaving the stage he repeats the fundamental premises of the scenario in which he is the eternal loser:

Combien que pour voir me debate  
 Et que mes rèsous soient justes,  
 Tu me mesdis touzjors et fustes;  
 Ne me chaut, fors que ne me touches;  
 Tu tenches et dis ces reprouches;  
 Tu pleures et plains et souspires,  
 Tu sanglotes, tu te dessires;  
 Tu monstres à ton filz ton ventre,  
 Et tel pitié u cuer li entre  
 Que tu par force l'amolies.  
 Il prent à bon gré tes folies,  
 Quant tu li monstres ta mamèle;  
 Tu le treiz si à ta cordèle  
 Qu'il ne t'a pover d'escondire;  
 Quant tu ris, il le convient rire;  
 Quant tu pleures, il veut pleurer. (vss. 2252-67)

Facing Satan, who has been duped, unjustly beaten, decried and jeered on all sides, Notre Dame, prostrate, her clothes shredded, under the compassionate gaze of the jury and the public, presses her Son to render the verdict—a verdict prepared in advance. The victory of Mary is praised with joy by the assembly of Saints. Similarly, the spectators can sing this refrain which expresses the basic axiom of the scenario:

Ahi, nostre douce Advocate,  
 Tu n'es ne ne peux estre mate,  
 Mès tu mates bien les Déables. (vss. 2471-73)

As we said above: on the divine chessboard of the world, *the white Queen always checkmates the black King*. Such is the case in all ideological plays of moralizing and edifying tendency. The same is true today in American westerns or in detective films. It is also the case in works conceived according to the prescriptions of Russian social realism. We should not blame the authors and public of the Middle Ages for wanting to express man's elemental joy at seeing Good triumph over Evil. Formerly, as today, *poetic justice* is revenge for injustice in the world.

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## NOTES

1. This essay was translated from the French by Norris J. Lacy.
2. On this technique, see our study "Enseignement et Spectacle," *Scripta Hierosolymitana*, 19 (1967), 126-151; cf. especially pp. 127-29 and note 10.
3. It is interesting to note that Mary not only acquired the attributes of Jesus in the popular cult which intensifies from the twelfth century on, but also occupies first place in religious literature and drama between 1230 and 1350; the poetic and dramatic Miracles relegate the Passion to the background.
4. Satan is not without resemblance to Lucifer in the stereotyped scene of the Harrowing of Hell: organizing his troops and barricading the entrance to the infernal pit, Lucifer is beaten by Christ, ludicrously crushed under the portal, helplessly witnessing the deliverance of the Patriarchs. There is, moreover, an interesting connection between this role of Satan-Lucifer and that of the ridiculous *capitano* of the *commedia dell'arte*.
5. We quote from the edition of F. V. Koenig, *Les Miracles de Notre Dame*, 2 vols. (Geneva, 1961).
6. We quote from the edition of G. Paris and U. Robert, *Les Miracles de Notre Dame par personnages*, 8 vols. (Paris, 1876-93).
7. Rutebeuf, *Le Miracle de Théophile*, ed. G. Frank (Paris, 1967).
8. For want of a critical edition (which we hope to publish in the near future), we quote from the version published by A. Montaiglon and G. Raynaud, *L'Advocacie Notre-Dame* (Paris, 1869, 1896).
9. A scene parallel to that of the chaining of Lucifer-Satan by Christ in the *Apocalypse*.
10. Satan, whose example Don Juan will follow later, seeks to prove his talents where the challenge is greatest: the domain of the sacred and pious—couples, monks, nuns, saints, the devout, etc.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 153-54. This motif recurs frequently in the Devil's mouth. Often he does not even dare pronounce the name of the Virgin. Still elsewhere, the very sound of her name makes him howl with anguish. These reactions include, over and above an affirmation of Mary's power, evident comic and grotesque elements.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 154. This lament of the Devil, frequently transformed into a true legal complaint, is hardly designed to present Satan as a tragic character; his lamentations unquestionably permit the creation of a comic and ironic effect. It is interesting to note, on the other hand, that this *Planctus* of the devils creates a comic counterpoint to the *Planctus Mariae* (when Mary uses the inventory of her sufferings to win God the Judge over to her side; see on p. 11 a similar scene in the *Advocacie Notre-Dame*). Finally, it is not unusual to see the Devil use the term *mat*, borrowed from the game of chess, to indicate that in the dramatic game and the agonistic dialogue which oppose him to Notre Dame, he is always the loser, the eternal *mate*. Cf. the conclusion of the *Advocacie Notre-Dame*.
13. This motif is fully developed in the *Advocacie Notre-Dame*, where God himself is obliged to intervene to restore a semblance of legality, but he is equally present in the dramatized Miracles.

14. The motif of the "depopulation of Hell" has its origin in the traditional scene of the Harrowing of Hell.

15. The realistic and naturalistic theatre of the nineteenth century, as well as a number of plays and films of the twentieth, have used the framework of a tribunal to set forth an ideological or psychological debate or a point of conscience. The scene of the *disputatio* in the religious drama of the Middle Ages satisfied the same taste of the public. Cf. our study cited in note 1.

16. Cf. *supra*. *Dou jovencel que li dyables ravi*.

17. In the *Advocacie Nostre-Dame*, this scene occupies a capital place and is ingeniously amplified.

18. Cf. Paris-Robert, *ed. cit.*, I, 49-50, vss. 1380-85.

19. Cf. *supra*., note 12.

20. An excellent example of distorted judgment is provided by G. Lanson (*Histoire de la littérature française* [Paris, 1951], p. 196): "ces drames, comme les narrations de Gauthier de Coincy et d'autres de même nature, nous font percevoir dans leurs incroyables excès l'absurdité, la grossièreté, l'immoralité même des formes où se dégrade la noblesse essentielle du culte de la Vierge. On ne saurait imaginer quels péchés ni quels pécheurs la Vierge arrache à l'enfer, au supplice, au déshonneur, sur un mot de repentir, même sur un simple acte d'hommage et de foi."

21. Cf., among others, *Lapsus et Conversio Theophili Vicedomni* of Hroswitha von Gandersheim (ed., Sister M. G. Wiegand); the *Miracle de Théophile* of Gauthier de Coincy; the *Miracle de Théophile* of Rutebeuf; the three German versions edited by R. Petsch, *Theophilus: Mittelniederdeutsches Drama in drei Fassungen*; etc.

22. Cf. G. Frank, *ed. cit.*, vss. 420-23.

23. Cf. *ibid.*, vss. 404-19. Unlike the medievalists who consider these verses to be an example of bad *préciosité*, an artificial game, we should see in the verbal frenzy a direct expression of the disarray and bewilderment which overwhelm Théophile in his profound spiritual agony.

24. Montaiglon-Raynaud, vss. 344-47.

# The Farce Wife: Myth, Parody, and Caricature

ALAN E. KNIGHT

Medieval drama, from its early function as ritual commentary on the liturgy to its late flourishing in the great myth plays and farces, was almost exclusively a popular genre. Even when plays did not originate among the people, their orientation was almost always non-aristocratic and non-clerical. Thus, in addition to the official beliefs embodied in didactic plays, we find a wide range of popular beliefs and customs reflected in all dramatic forms of the period. For examining questions raised by the relationship of literature to society, medieval drama furnishes us with an extremely valuable body of material. In approaching this material, however, we should take care to avoid the simplistic notion that drama, even so-called realistic drama, gives us in any sense a photographic image of the society that produced it. We must also keep in mind the fact that drama, like literature and the other arts, is first of all a product of the imagination. It may take its raw material from the society that gives it birth, but its character and direction are derived from the more general and abstract ideals of that society, as expressed through the medium of its own mythology.<sup>1</sup>

I would like to examine some of the questions surrounding one of the points at which literature and society intersect—that is, the image of woman in the late medieval farce—not with the idea of determining what it was like to be a woman in the late Middle Ages, but with the hope of seeing more clearly some of the complex literary relationships underlying that particular image. Once we see how the formal and structural elements of the farce are interrelated on the imaginative level, we will be in a better position to understand how a dramatic genre embodying such elements functions in society on the existential level.

As in most historical periods, society in the Middle Ages was thoroughly masculine in both structure and orientation. Its political, ethical, and theological models had been created by men and shaped to fit men's needs and desires. Such a social structure, even at its best, will put strain on the general relations between men and women; but if these relations are widely viewed with suspicion, especially in the basic institutions of marriage and the family, then harsh treatment of the sex designated as "weaker" is bound to ensue. Medieval moral treatises are replete with formulas for testing the love of one's wife or children and with warnings against showing them too much affection lest they be spoiled or given occasions for pride. Collective attitudes of this kind are symptomatic of a profound mistrust of self that has been unconsciously and defensively transferred to others. In a male dominated society, women, of course, will constitute a large segment of such "others." Consequently, the ethical and social restraints devised to preserve moral "law and order" will be far more stringently binding on women than on men.



This is the same psychological mechanism that underlies the practice of preventive detention in totalitarian states, and I believe we are justified in viewing the institutionalized restriction of women (or of any group, for that matter) as a kind of social preventive detention.

The position of women in the Middle Ages gave rise to a number of conventional literary images of woman. In the satirical genres, these images tend to cluster around the polarized categories of bad women and good women. These, in turn, are patterned on the archetypal figures of Eve, the mother of the fallen race, and Mary, the mother of the god-redeemer. The genres based on these conventional images form the nucleus of a continuing literary debate or *querelle des femmes*, the beginning of which antedates Rabelais' *Tiers Livre* by several hundred years. A brief glance at this and two other literary traditions—the moral and courtly love traditions—will provide a background for our discussion of the farce.

In the late thirteenth-century antifeminist satire, *Le Blastange des fames*, the anonymous author, speaking of the treachery and deviousness of woman, asserts:

Ce sont unes choses bien certes  
Que fames sevent par nature  
Pou bien et trop mal aventure.  
En eles est toz mauz repus.<sup>2</sup>

What is striking in this passage is not so much the medieval commonplace that women conceal every evil within themselves, but the contention that the evil is there by nature. The author is not speaking here of the second nature of acquired habit—the kind of mental habit, for example, that makes his assertion seem so natural—but of the first nature of inherent and essential qualities. It was widely accepted in the Middle Ages that the differences between man and woman were so great as to constitute two distinct natures. Mathéolus reminds us that woman, after all, was made from bone, while man was made from the dust of the earth. And since bone is more clangorous than earth, women are naturally more vociferous and argumentative than men. From this he concludes:

De nature leur vient a toutes  
Qu'elles sont foles et estoutes.<sup>3</sup>

Implicit in this general view, or this myth, is the conviction that, because of woman's inherently imperfect and evil nature, the world would quickly be plunged into moral chaos if female behavior were not strictly controlled by rigid rules and constant policing. Woman's inferior social status, which was explained and justified by the literally accepted Hebrew myth of human genesis, was thus reinforced by a general belief in her defective nature. In a kind of self-confirming circularity, this attitude influenced the interpretation of the myth of the expulsion from an earthy paradise, where, it would seem, only Adam fell from a true state of original justice. Eve may have been *innocent* before the Fall, but the seeds of evil were already implanted in her nature awaiting only the season of temptation to germinate. Adam, by his

position and his nature, was solely responsible for the moral future of mankind, and, had he not been deceived and led astray by woman's wiles, Eve's flirtation with the serpent would have had no consequences for the human race. Our concern here is with a literary sub-structure in the form of a social myth rather than with theological positions on the origin and nature of man. Yet, it is worth noting that the theologians who wrestled with similar questions concerning woman generally fell into the same misogynist camp as the satirists. St. Thomas Aquinas, following Aristotle, held woman to be defective and misbegotten,<sup>4</sup> while St. Bonaventure insisted that the feminine sex was more inclined to evil than the masculine.<sup>5</sup>

From the numerous moral treatises written in the Middle Ages for the instruction and correction of women, a somewhat different image of woman emerges. It is true that the authors of these works impose severe limitations on women's behavior and activities. It is likewise true that in these works women are regarded more as objects, ranging from courtly ornaments to chattel, than as persons. When Robert de Blois says, for example:

Famme n'est bele ne plaisanz  
Quant ele est de tancier ardanz,<sup>6</sup>

he implies, among other things, that any expression of strong feeling in a woman reduces her ornamental value. Or when Philippe de Novare says, "Mout sont fames avilenies, quant eles sont blâmées, et plus quant eles mesfont,"<sup>7</sup> his concern is prompted as much by a male aversion to accepting used merchandise in marriage as it is by Christian morality. But, in spite of all this, there is one characteristic of paramount importance that distinguishes these works from the antifeminist satires. Every moral treatise is an act of faith in the educability of woman and is therefore fundamentally optimistic. Think, for example, of the tender concern and sanguine hopes that moved the Chevalier de La Tour Landry to compose his book of instructions for his daughters. To expect that one's daughters will learn to live by such a book is to believe that woman is essentially capable of responsibility and that she is not naturally and ineluctably inclined to evil.

The image of woman that was created and elaborated in the love poetry of the Provençal troubadours stands in sharp contrast to the images we have seen in the satirical and moral traditions. Here, woman is sought after for her beauty and feminine graces; she is the beloved, who bestows her love on whom she will. Far from being defective by nature, she is a model of perfection and an occasion of virtue for her lover. Instead of being reviled, she is adored and given all the attentions and considerations that poetry can invent. Thus woman becomes the center of a cult whose liturgy is the language of love. The sex object is metamorphosed into a goddess, and the energy of male desire is transformed into a ritual of poetic service. Rather than take the desired object by force, the lover allows himself to be awed by the power the beloved holds over him. This respect of woman is the fundamental distinguishing characteristic of the courtly love tradition, separating it from the other literary traditions of satire and moral instruction. But it is a feeling which endures only so long as the quest game lasts.

If we look upon these three traditions as broad literary genres, we can say that each genre gives expression to a different relationship between man and woman. Antifeminist satire describes woman from the point of view of the victim; moral treatises portray her from the guardian's point of view; and courtly love poetry views her through the eyes of the lover. The farce, when it treats of amorous or conjugal relationships, is always satirical in its portrayal of women, and at least one male character—usually the husband—is presented as the victim of woman's malevolence. As we shall see, when the medieval French farce absorbed certain elements of the other two genres without also assuming their point of view, the result was parody and caricature.

Approximately 175 farces have survived from the Middle Ages, all dating from the century between 1450 and 1550. More than half of these deal with conjugal or amorous situations in which the wives are depicted according to the satirical stereotype. Farce wives are not all of a kind, however, and the variations in their negative qualities are worth noting. The most common type is the deceitful wife. (This fact points to a focus of anxiety in medieval society, where great importance was placed on external traits such as appearance, manners, reputation, and social insignia.) The deception of the farce wife usually turns on an act of marital infidelity, which in turn presupposes an inclination to disobedience and an insatiable sexual desire. A good example of feminine deceit is found in the *Farce de Martin de Cambray*<sup>8</sup> where the wife is kept under lock and key by a jealous husband. She has her lover, the parish priest, appear in devil's disguise and carry her off to "hell" before her husband's eyes. On being returned home by the same "devil," she tells Martin that jealous husbands suffer the worst torments in hell, whereupon he gives her the key to the house and her freedom to come and go as she pleases.

A considerable number of farce wives, in addition to being deceptive, are domineering to the point that their husbands cower in submission to their sharp tongues, never daring to talk back. Some of these Caspar Milquetoasts endure their subordinate position throughout a play, while others reassert their authority at the end by punishing the wife or by chasing the lover away. Because the ability to dominate is a talent with which these farce wives are richly endowed by nature, there would be an inherent absurdity in a university trying to confer such an ability with one of its degrees, even if it gave degrees to women. Yet, in the *Farce des femmes qui se font passer maistresses*,<sup>9</sup> a certain Maistre Regnault arrives in Paris with papal letters empowering him to confer university degrees on women. Two young wives, each with two years experience in marriage, present themselves as candidates. After being examined on how well they have learned to dominate their husbands, they are officially given the degree of *Maistresse* in both the university and their own households.

A third basic type of farce wife is the malicious wife. Generally speaking, malice is not an isolated characteristic, but is found in combination with the other negative qualities described above. The wife of Jehan in the *Farce du*

*pasté*<sup>10</sup> is not only deceitful and domineering to a high degree, she is also malicious, spiteful, and cruel. She forces Jehan to heat wax to mend a water pot while she and her lover, the local curate, eat the pâté that the famished husband so desperately craves. During the meal, she drinks to his health while he is busy heating the wax. (*Chauffer la cire* was a slang expression meaning "to wait a long time for nothing.") After the pâté has been devoured by the lovers, the wife asks Jehan with feigned concern and innocence, "N'avez-vous pas souppé?"

By contrast, there are farces where the wife is faithful to her husband and, moreover, makes no effort to deceive him. In plays of this kind, the action is focused on a relationship other than the conjugal one, and the satire is aimed at characters other than the wife. *Maistre Pierre Pathelin*, the one farce that everyone knows, is a good example. Guillemette is the true and faithful wife who supports her husband, even in his petty thievery. While her role is essential to the action, her relationship to Pathelin is not. This farce turns on the relationships that exist among the three men: Pathelin, the draper, and the shepherd. Guillemette's role could be assigned to some other accomplice without disturbing the play's central point of *à trompeur, trompeur et demi*. Plays of this sort are not antifeminist satires, because the wife claims no victims and because the conjugal relationship is accessory to the dramatic action. On the other hand, plays in which the conjugal relationship is central to the action may be termed conjugal farces. All such farces can be classed as a sub-genre of the antifeminist farce, in which either the wife's infidelity, her usurpation of authority, or a combination of the two is an essential element.

Another sub-genre of the antifeminist farce is the amorous farce. This category includes plays from which the husband is absent—or at least he is not the victim—and in which the central relationship is that between the wife and her lover. In this kind of play, the lover replaces the husband as victim of the woman's machinations. We know that in the courtly love tradition one of the refinements inspired in the lover by the beloved is the ability to sing her praises in elegant verse. When, however, the high style of courtly love poetry is imitated in a satirical genre where the lover is victim of the beloved, the content becomes laughable and the result is formal parody. In the *Farce des trois amoureux de la croix*,<sup>11</sup> three young gallants—Martin, Gaultier, and Guillaume—are all in love with a married woman who does not share their amorous feelings. Her appellation, La Dame, suggests that the conjugal relationship is accessory to the action, and, indeed, the husband does not appear in the play at all. Each of the lovers secretly approaches the lady and declares his fervid and undying love in swatches of florid verse. Martin is the first to greet his beloved:

Dame, de mon povre pover,  
Je vous salue très humblement,  
Vous suppliant très doucement  
Que je soye en vostre demaine,

Car vous estes la primeraine  
Des dames, et plaisez à tous.  
(vss. 47-52)

When she expresses surprise at this sudden declaration of love, he continues:

Las! je suis prins  
Et si hardement lié  
De vostre amour. Si n'en suis delié  
Bref par vostre douceur,  
Certainement je suis assureur  
De mourir sans aucun secours!  
(vss. 66-71)

Unfortunately for Martin, as his rhetoric becomes more extravagant, the woman's skepticism becomes more pronounced:

Entre vous, galans, sçavés tours  
Subtilz et faictes les semblans  
D'estre malades et tremblans  
Tousjours, mais ce n'est que faintise.  
(vss. 72-75)

When, finally, he offers her ten ducats for her love, she cynically accepts the money and sets a time and place for a tryst that she has no intention of keeping. Gaultier next approaches, and the scene is repeated in much the same language:

Ha! Madame, je vous diray,  
Nul n'y sauroit remède mettre  
Que vous, car vous estes le maistre  
Et l'euvre de ma maladie.  
Que voulés-vous que je vous die?  
Je seuffre tel paine et douleur  
Pour vous que, se vostre douceur  
Ne consent à moy secourir,  
Force me sera de mourir  
Du mal que j'ay et du martire.  
(vss. 146-155)

Again the woman accepts money and sets a tryst. The same action is then repeated with Guillaume, including the parody of courtly love poetry. The woman has told each suitor to come in a certain disguise in order to protect the secret of his love from her husband. The first is to be dressed as a priest, the second as a dead man, and the third as a devil. The scene of confusion and chaos that develops when the three disguised men meet at the cross in the square is one of the most comic in all the farces. When the gallants ultimately recognize one another, they swear never again to trust in women's promises. *Les Trois Amoureux* is not the only farce to parody the style of

serious love poetry,<sup>12</sup> but before drawing conclusions from the presence of such parody in a dramatic genre, let us examine the conjugal and amorous farces somewhat more in detail.

If the declarations of love just quoted are parodies of the courtly love style, then the characters who make them are caricatures of courtly lovers. Their professions of love are too sudden and too awkward to be part of the serious tradition. Moreover, they show no consideration for the feelings of the lady. But the most serious breach of the courtly ethic is the payment of money for the lady's love. The woman in *Les Trois Amoureux* is likewise a caricature of the beloved. It is true that she never pretends to be what she is not, but the continual reference to her as La Dame places her in a position that is not common to the ordinary farce wife. It is the trick she plays on the lovers and, above all, her cynicism that characterize her as a petty bourgeois housewife, and that create the caricature of the courtly ideal of woman as inspirer of brave deeds and manly virtues.

The caricature is much broader in scope, however, than just aiming at aristocratic love conventions. The farce wife is a concrete embodiment of all the traits and qualities that the books of manners and the moral treatises warn women to avoid. Consider, for example, a few of the lessons in the *Chastoiement des dames* of Robert de Blois, a work that was still current in the early sixteenth century, since it was printed in the *Jardin de plaisance* in 1501. The most basic assumption of this and all other moral works was the absolute and unalterable necessity of a wife's faithfulness and obedience to her husband. But we have already seen that the infraction of these cardinal requirements of wifely conduct is a *sine qua non* of the conjugal farce. Robert teaches women never to lie, yet deceit is essential to the farce wife. He admonishes women never to show anger, never to engage in disputes or fights; yet the farce wife is typically a termagant or a shrew that resists taming. Personal hygiene is an important lesson for Robert, who devotes several sections of his work to the subject; yet such expletives as *sale*, *orde*, and *puante* are among those most frequently hurled at farce wives.

In some of the farce couples we see caricatures of the philosophical and theological conceptions of the differences in authority and dignity between man and woman. In the farce version of these distinctions, woman is a creature of a different species from man. Her character is so totally at odds with man's character that the two can only be in conflict when they are brought together. Thus the enmity between the sexes has its source in the order of nature. In the *Farce de Tarabin et Tarabas*<sup>13</sup> a husband and wife are at war. Tarabin cannot stand her husband's *teste* and declaims against it in a striking passage of verbal fantasy:

O mauldite teste de fer,  
 Teste testue, teste verte,  
 Teste posée en faulx test,  
 Teste qui jamais ne se taist,  
 Teste hongnant, teste hargneuse,

Teste lunatique et fumeuse,  
Teste à doze paire de tocques,  
Teste plaine de friquenoques,  
Teste cliquant à tous propos,  
Me donneras-tu jamais repos?  
(vss. 7-16)

Similarly, Tarabas, who has an antipathy for his wife's *cul*, vituperates against the offending part in a passage redolent of descriptive detail:

Fendasse puante et punaise,  
Cul rond à très orde mesure,  
Crevasse plaine d'ordure,  
Trou breneux dont tant de bren sort,  
Le cul de tous les culz plus ort,  
Me donneras-tu jà pacience?  
(vss. 28-33)

Their servant, Tribouille Mesnage, tries to stop the battle and unite the couple, but to no avail. Just as *teste* and *cul* are irreconcilable opposites, man and woman are forever separated by opposing natures.

Caricatures of types of women in the conjugal farces sometimes bear an external resemblance to the *exempla* of bad women in moral works. They should not, however, be read as such, because the primary orientation of the farce is esthetic rather than ethical. Exaggerated depictions of wantons and harridans, even if they do resemble cautionary *exempla*, mainly serve comic and dramatic purposes in these plays. As we saw in the case of parodies of courtly love poetry, a farce may incorporate the form of another genre without adopting its point of view or its intrinsic conception. The extent to which medieval farces were didactic—if one may say that all literature is to some extent, however slight, didactic—is a question that makes sense only in terms of the social function of the farce, to which we now return.

We said in the beginning that literature does not provide us with a direct picture of a society, but that it expresses collective wishes and anxieties through the medium of that society's own mythology. We have, so far, described the myth of woman that underlies antifeminist satire, and we have examined it in several of its literary manifestations, especially as it pertains to the farce wife. It is now appropriate for us to ask what wishes or anxieties of late medieval society this myth expressed and, conversely, how the myth functioned in that society through the dramatic medium of the conjugal farce to fulfill those wishes or to allay those anxieties.

Men in the Middle Ages were in general agreement that, in accordance with the divinely established order of nature, women were subject to their authority. And in a society where even men were so little their own masters, this authority was close to what we would call ownership. In the upper classes, for example, marital matches were made between fiefs or fortunes to the extent that the betrothal was often subordinate to the transfer of

property. In the lower classes, where the dowry was small or nonexistent, the same principle obtained, but the woman herself became the major property given in a marriage. Thus, medieval marriage was more a political and economic institution than it was an affective bond between a man and a woman, and the anxieties surrounding this kind of marriage are perhaps more easily understood expressed in political and economic terms. In this sense, adultery was fundamentally a matter of theft, and a wife's disobedience was tantamount to insurrection.

Since the social structure, with all its rigid categories, was held to have been established by God and was therefore immutable, a husband's clear obligation was to exercise his familial authority. If he failed, then not just his domestic tranquility, but the divine and social orders as well were threatened. This is why, in a society where wife-beating was accepted as normal, henpecked husbands and husbands who were beaten by their wives were frequently made objects of public derision. Petit de Julleville reports the following custom from the city of Lyon: "L'exercice favori des suppôts de la Coquille consistait à promener assis à rebours sur un âne, les maris qu'on accusait de se laisser battre par leurs femmes; usage singulier qu'on rencontre au moyen âge dans beaucoup de provinces."<sup>14</sup> In these comic processions, weak members of the group or their proxies were isolated and ridiculed as they were driven through the streets on asses. It is questionable whether this form of direct moral reprisal had any significant effect on the behavior of husbands. However that may be, the major function of such a ritual was not so much to punish the offender, as to neutralize a threat to group solidarity by making the deviant person seem ludicrous. The heaping of ridicule on a real life scapegoat served to alleviate group tensions and anxieties in the area of marital relationships.

The farce, on the other hand, created a hypothetical or fictitious world without power to impose sanctions directly on weak husbands. It therefore utilized a character type to hold up the *idea* of a weak husband to ridicule. The conjugal farces may have had a certain indirect influence on the behavior of husbands in the audience by reinforcing some of the basic values of the community. But, just as in the comic processions, the major social function of these plays was the neutralizing of a threat to group stability. In this case, the farce husband who allowed himself to be dominated and victimized by his wife became the vicarious scapegoat to which the audience transferred its fear and contempt through laughter.

There is another way in which the conjugal and amorous farces offered solace to the paterfamilias who bore the anxiety of total authority. It provided him with an easy explanation of whatever family or domestic difficulties he might have by dramatizing, and thus reinforcing, the myth of woman as the fountainhead of evil. By dint of constant repetition of the myth, it had become a kind of article of faith that each woman was a new Eve, capable of opening her Pandora's box of evils at any time. Like Eve, every woman supposedly bore within her the seeds of pride and rebellion, awaiting only the right moment to germinate.



We find this doctrine particularly well illustrated in the *Farce de Resjouy d'Amours*.<sup>15</sup> Tendrette, Gaultier's wife, is a young girl who gives the impression of being newly married. She has been well brought up and prepared for marriage, being able to quote numerous maxims concerning the beauty of the conjugal state, which she has probably learned from some moral treatise. She knows a wife's duties to her husband and endeavors to keep herself physically attractive to please him. She has been warned to beware of golden-tongued gallants and knows full well that their flatteries are intended only to deceive. Finally, she gives every appearance of being happy with her husband. Yet, when Resjouy comes along with his high-flown words of love, Tendrette, after first making a weak effort to resist, succumbs to his blandishments and asks him to return at an hour when Gaultier is certain to be at work. Gaultier, however, learns of the plan and comes home at the appointed hour in order to catch the lover. In a fraction of a second, this young wife is able to invent a ruse which saves her lover and baffles her husband. She tells Resjouy to hide in a sack, and when Gaultier sets fire to the house to smoke the gallant out, she saves the sack because it contains their "worldly goods." Thus Resjouy escapes, leaving Gaultier confounded by his own rashness.

What seems to be happening in the person of Tendrette is a kind of coming of age—a passage from innocence to experience—by which she comes into full possession of all her natural instincts. A similar progression is discernible in other farce wives. As a character in another play expresses it:

Tousjours est jallouse et rebelle  
Quant elle vient ung peu à l'aage.<sup>16</sup>

Tendrette is an apt name for a young wife, but relatively rare in the farce. Finette is a more common name for a farce wife and is more appropriate for a woman whose innate deceitfulness has become manifest. There is a sense in which all women in the conjugal farces begin as Tendrette and end as Finette, because they eventually call upon their natural cunning to perplex and confound their husbands. Lubine, the mother of Maistre Mymin, articulates an axiom of the farce when she says:

Il n'est finesse que de femme.<sup>17</sup>

We see, then, that in the conjugal farce, disobedience, infidelity, and deceit are an integral part of woman's nature—innate vices that will appear in her conduct sooner or later, no matter how steeped in moral maxims or how well married she may be.

This, then, was the myth of woman that was embodied in the conjugal farces. It was one of the elements in medieval society that helped men to externalize and, thus, cope with certain of their fears and conflicts. Just as natural disasters were often explained as the work of malicious demons, so responsibility for personal or group conflicts was easily projected onto persons who were, by definition, sources of evil. One may add that women, who were villains in the plays, sometimes became scapegoats in real life, and the extent to which they were blamed for the ills of late medieval society is

attested by the sharp rise in recorded witch trials in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Finally, the undeviating image of woman in the conjugal and amorous farces provided a certain continuity with the past and perhaps even an illusion of stability in a changing society. At a time when the crystalline structure of the earlier medieval culture was disintegrating and a new social order was emerging, bringing with it a somewhat more liberal view of woman, the farce maintained very strong ties to the past by adhering blindly to the old antifeminist tradition. There is a tenacity in verbal images and literary structures that, in combination with an outmoded myth, can turn a literary genre into a force for resisting change. On the surface, the parody of courtly love poetry that was absorbed by some of the farces may, indeed, have been the revolt of an uncomprehending popular audience against the seemingly unnecessary poetic constraints of aristocratic formalism. Likewise, the farce's caricature of the ideal woman as portrayed in moral and didactic works may, indeed, have been a kind of folk rebellion against the rigidity of official morality. But, on the deeper structural level of its informing social myth, the conjugal farce functioned as a conservative force in the midst of social upheaval. On this level, there was never a suggestion of rebellion or even of change. The scapegoat husband on the stage provided a necessary outlet for the frustrations of the insecure husband in the audience, but the farce wife seemed to say to the real wife:

Prenez patience et souffrez.<sup>18</sup>

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## NOTES

1. Jean Duvignaud, *Sociologie du théâtre* (Paris: Presses Univ. de France, 1965), p. 42.
2. Achille Jubinal, ed., *Jongleurs et trouvères* (Paris: J. A. Merklein, 1835), p. 77.
3. *Les Lamentations de Mathéolus*, ed. A. G. Van Hamel (Paris: Emile Bouillon, 1892), p. 53.
4. "Per respectum ad naturam particularem, femina est aliquid deficiens et occasionatum." *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 92, a. 1, ad 1.
5. "Quantum est ex parte naturae, nisi adsit fortitudo maioris gratiae, facilius incurvatur ad malum sexus femineus." *II Sent.*, dist. 21, a. 1, q. 3.
6. *Le Chastoiement des dames*, in *Robert de Blois, son oeuvre didactique et narrative*, ed. John Howard Fox (Paris: Librairie Nizet, 1950), p. 141.
7. *Les Quatre Ages de l'homme*, ed. Marcel de Fréville, S.A.T.F. (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1888), p. 50.
8. *Recueil de farces françaises inédites du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. Gustave Cohen (Cambridge, Mass.: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1949), p. 317.
9. *Recueil*, p. 113.
10. *Recueil*, p. 145.
11. *Recueil*, p. 57.
12. See, for example, the *Farce de Resjouy d'Amours*, *Recueil*, p. 135.
13. *Recueil*, p. 95.
14. *Les Comédiens en France au moyen âge* (Paris: L. Cerf, 1885), p. 243. In some localities a husband might be similarly ridiculed for beating his wife, but only during the month of May. See pp. 205-213.
15. *Recueil*, p. 135.
16. *La Farce de Regnault qui se marie à Lavollée*, *Recueil*, p. 52.
17. *La Farce de Maistre Mymyn qui va à la guerre*, *Recueil*, p. 32. The same statement is found at the end of the *Farce du Badin*, in *Ancien Théâtre français*, ed. E. Viollot le Duc (Paris: P. Jannet, 1854), I, 288.
18. *La Farce des femmes qui font refondre leurs maris*, *Ancien Théâtre français*, I, 92.

# Classes and Genres in Medieval Literature

PAUL ZUMTHOR

The problem which I wish to set forth here, if not treat in detail, comprises two closely related aspects: one, which is theoretical, deals with the most general questions related to the creation of a meaning; the other is philological.<sup>1</sup>

My purpose is to try to isolate from the medieval literary corpus the pertinent features which would make it possible to classify its elements without recourse to external criteria. I shall consider, globally and synchronically, the ensemble of literary texts which can be dated, let us say, from 1150 to 1300.

Here we are confronted with a vast and unlimited terrain. It is our task to distinguish, by an examination of its physical characteristics, its parts and their different functions.

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One preliminary question: did the authors or copyists of the Middle Ages have the idea or the feeling that poetic texts were organized into generic entities? They possessed a "literary" vocabulary, made of bits and pieces, used in a rather uncertain way, and which was undoubtedly prevented from becoming consistent by the lack of any theoretical thought on poetry. The only form which seems to have been identified as such is the *chanson*, as it was created in Old Provençal by the troubadours and as it was adapted later in several other languages. But the relative precision of this definition lasted only for a limited time: the Old Provençal word *canso*, on which the French *chanson* was modeled, had entered into usage only around 1170, to replace the old term *vers*, which then began to disappear. In the fifteenth century, for Charles d'Orléans, a *chanson* is a *rondeau* which is sung.

Some terms like *descort* or *jeu-parti* designate derivatives of the *chanson* and have their own constant rules. But outside this area, medieval terminology remains vague and inconstant. The Old Provençal *sirventes* is a song treating a subject matter which differs from that of the real *chanson*; from this word the French language creates *sirventois*, which it uses especially for certain forms of Marial poetry. In the thirteenth century, several expressions enter into usage for a short period of time, to indicate, more by their theme than by their form, poetic entities which were perhaps old and which could have re-emerged then as the result of a kind of folkloric vogue: hence *chanson d'histoire* and *chanson de toile*, apparently interchangeable terms; *reverdie*, the meaning of which is not clear to us; *pastourelle*; *aube*. The Old Provençal word *planh* designates any kind of song of lament. Other words refer in a rather confused manner to a certain form, without regard to its content: *rondeau*, *virelai*. Their number will increase in the fourteenth century. The *ballade* and *chant-royal* will then be

late avatars of the *chanson*, freed from its thematic constraints. *Motet* refers to a musical technique, undoubtedly in the same way as the expression *son poitevin*; *estampie* indicates a choreographic form, as does perhaps *rotrouenge*, which we do not entirely understand.

Until the fourteenth century, all these terms at least designate different song forms; that is their only unity. Aside from *chanson de geste*, which is well attested and perhaps the only expression that is never ambiguous, another lexical group can be distinguished, referring to narrative texts which are not sung—but the distribution of the various terms in this group seems more or less haphazard. Their meaning is entirely elusive: *estoire*, *dit*, *exemple*, *conte*, *fable* and its diminutives *fablel*, *fabliau*. According to H. R. Jauss, during a short period of time around 1200 *estoire* and *dit*, which were new words, were apparently distinguished from *conte* and *fable* on the basis of the truthfulness of their content.<sup>2</sup> After this date they intersect and blend continuously. *Lai* enters into this series, but it indicates a lyric form as well, and an interesting study by Baum has shown that this ambiguity results from the very way of thinking of the users of this term.<sup>3</sup> As for *roman*, it properly means any composition in vernacular language which can be opposed to a Latin model, even a very distant one.

Medieval languages do not have a word to express a concept corresponding to our "theatre." The manuscripts which have transmitted to us various liturgical dramas sometimes designate these works by the Latin names *ordo* and *ludus*, translated into French by *jeu*. It is only at the time of the greatest development of scenic techniques, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, that terms like *farce*, *sottie*, *moralité*, and *mistère* appear; their definitions are not without some difficulty for us, and their distribution is not at all systematic. The expression *miracle par personnages* is more a definition than a designation.

Thus, little can be drawn from this terminology. An analytic classification can be of some value, but its usefulness is limited either by excessive generality or particularity. The user of a particular term thinks of a certain existing text rather than of common characteristics which link it in a significant way to other texts. Or, on the other hand, he becomes, with apparent indifference, so abstract that any word he uses means little more than "text."

Several works in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, either seriously or in jest, have the author or jongleur enumerate his repertoire: the *Dit des deux bourdeurs rivaux*<sup>4</sup> accumulates pell-mell *chanson de geste*, *roman d'aventure*, *contes*, *fabliaux*, *dits*, *rotrouenges*, *sirventois*, and *pastourelles*, in what seems to be a pure effect of verbal fantasy. Moreover, enumerations of this kind usually juxtapose specific references rather than generalities: "I can sing (he sang) of *Roland and Ogier*," and "He told about *Perceval and Gauvain*," rather than "*chansons de geste*" and "*romans*."

The first germ of a classification based on the reality of practice appears with Jean Bodel, at the beginning of the thirteenth century: this author distinguishes three narrative "subject matters," that of France (represented

especially by the *chansons de geste*), that of Brittany (in the so-called "Breton" romances and tales), and that of Rome (in the works which took their subject from Latin tradition); he justifies this division by distinguishing three levels of verisimilitude and three kinds of veracity.<sup>5</sup> This declaration remains however an isolated case.

In the closed scholastic circles, and in relation to Latin literature, the very memory of the Aristotelian distinction between the two kinds of *mimesis* (narrative and direct representation) was lost. Dante, in *De vulgari eloquentia*, II, 4-5, revives a distinction, outlined by some theorists in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, between "tragic," "comic," and "elegiac": the first two constitute, in his opinion, varieties of narrative which are distinguished by their stylistic processes and their choices of subject matter; the third is defined only thematically.<sup>6</sup>

In this scholarly tradition the doctrine of genres tends to be confused with a theory of modalities of discourse. It implies some recollection of the ancient distinction of the three *genera* of rhetoric: active (without authorial intervention), narrative (only the author speaks), and mixed—a distinction which is overlapped by that of styles. These ideas remain rather imprecise and, being closely bound up with Latin tradition, have little practical significance. The classification of rhetoric into judiciary, deliberative, and demonstrative could have provided the doctrinal foundation of the distinction of the epic, lyric, and dramatic "genres," but the Middle Ages were apparently unaware of such a classification, which will be revived only in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

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Traditionally, medievalists speak of *genres*. This notion, which has been questioned by numerous recent studies, requires closer analysis. Elaborated long after the Middle Ages, the theory of genres, as it has served for three centuries as a framework for the study of literature, is seriously ambiguous. Roughly, the word *genre* designates a certain configuration of literary possibilities, functioning as a standard for the classification of a certain number of works, independently of their meaning. But at what level can these possibilities be defined? This uncertainty is at the root of all the misconceptions and makes it impossible to establish a clear and complete catalogue of genres.

What other notions might we try to define? Several other lines of cleavage intersect to trace the landscape of medieval poetry. But they are not equally prominent. Some of them can be defined with rather great precision; for others this can be done only in prudently chosen general terms.

The first criterion one might think of involves the rhythmic factor of tradition. It presents the advantage of allowing a division which is simple—reducible to four hierarchic oppositions—but the discriminative value of which sometimes differs considerably in practice:

1. verse / prose
- 2a. verse with regular groupings (strophes) / verse without regular groupings

b. verse grouped in irregular passages / verse in continuous discourse (without clear breaks)

3. rhythmically embellished prose / non-embellished prose

The oppositions 2b. and especially 3 are unequally pertinent: the texts in question often present a composite character. On the other hand, 2a. is very clear and coincides almost always with several other linguistic or thematic oppositions.

It would be impossible, however, under 1 and 2, to take into account the kind of meter. Some vague tendencies can be discerned, but apparently they have not attained institutional status. Thus, lines of more than eight syllables are almost always narrative, which is very seldom the case for lines having fewer than that number, while the octosyllabic verse remains ambivalent; rhymed couplets or repetitive rhymes generally indicate narrative discourse. In this way, one could formulate a small number of distributive rules which varied, moreover, with the passage of time.

To a certain extent, rhetorical devices are distributed according to some relatively constant tendencies, at least at the earliest period, although we sometimes find rather great differences from text to text within a single group (for instance, among romances). From a quantitative point of view, certain areas of poetry are more open to these practices; others, less so or hardly at all. Among the first, we find the ecclesiastic poetry of the eleventh and twelfth centuries and, to a much greater degree, the romance of the twelfth and thirteenth; in the second group, the *chanson de geste*. From a qualitative point of view, two nuances of usage could be roughly distinguished, by the dominance of hyperbole, litotes, and simile on one hand, or metaphor and allegory on the other. This difference corresponds approximately to that between a non-courtly discourse and a courtly one. Thus, in the early *chansons* with a liturgical function, the proportion of metaphors amounts to fewer than ten per cent of the figures; in the works of the troubadours, it reaches fifty per cent or more. Narrative texts, with the exception of the "romance," belong generally to the first class.

But these distinctions deal only with nuances. If we try to give them a discriminatory value, the criterion becomes too rigorous to be applied easily to the medieval French corpus.

Several other conceivable criteria of classification would be simultaneously useful; for example, *the length of the work*, all the more important since the work is designed to be heard. We might oppose short texts to long texts, which makes little sense in theory but often turns out to be accessorially useful in practice. Indeed, a classification based on length (which is necessarily approximate) often confirms other classifications: in the vast group of narrative texts, the opposition short/long is useless (at least apparently so) insofar as it causes us to group together the *Chanson de Roland* and *Yvain* of Chrétien de Troyes, but it constitutes one of the pertinent characteristics which oppose, for instance, *Yvain* to the *Châtelaine de Vergi*.<sup>7</sup> Aside from some rare exceptions, narrative texts are generally longer

than so-called "lyric" texts; this results from internal functional causes, but also from the manner of decoding required by the nature of the text, according to whether or not the listener needs a temporal perspective for its understanding.

Other possible formal criteria:

sung/not sung

narrative/non-narrative

formulaic/non-formulaic

morpho-lexical concentration (a small number of elements for a large number of occurrences) / morpho-lexical dispersion (the opposite)

These oppositions frequently cumulate. Their usefulness is undeniable, and they must enter into the analysis.

The very extent of the corpus and its relative complexity, from a synchronic and a diachronic point of view, require a combination of several perspectives. Only their convergence will yield a useful classification; that is, one which can be satisfactorily established prior to the analysis and the interpretation of the texts.

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The approach which I suggest contains an initial "ascending" phase (as Greimas uses this term), which, starting from an inventory of occurrences, defines classes and classes of classes, to result in the construction of a model. Here, because of the nature of the corpus, we seek as limited a number of models as possible; their common pertinent characteristics should be situated at a high level of abstraction, but their particular characteristics should necessarily allow a certain approximation. Indeed, all models that can be constructed with regard to facts of historical nature have a logical character, while on the other hand, their manifestations present wide, indefinite fringes. The more general the model, the wider are these fringes.

The only efficient procedure involves the initial delimitation, not of abstract classes, but of historical groups, as does typological linguistics for languages and families of languages. The class will be defined by an internal form, the existence of which is confirmed by proof of commutation among all the texts forming the class, but which excludes the interchangeability, from one class to another, of a certain number of characteristics which are therefore considered relevant. The "class" is thus based upon a continuity defined at the level of a predominant trait, around which the "works" organize themselves.

The classification of the units of the corpus implies the establishment of a hierarchy, and it will be useful to distinguish quite clearly the order of the subdivisions (from top to bottom) and of the regroupings (from bottom to top). We cannot omit diachronic considerations; in fact, they may, in doubtful cases, provide the only criterion which allows us to determine the order in question. Moreover, the number of units and ensembles, as well as their mutual relationship, could have varied considerably from the ninth and tenth to the fifteenth centuries.

I shall propose a particularly clear example; that is, what were called in the thirteenth century "*chansons de toile*." My point of departure is the text of *Bele Aiglentine*, a fifty-line poem inserted as an ornament in Jean Renart's romance *Guillaume de Dole*, written about 1220. I think I have proved in a recent study<sup>8</sup> that this text had a variant, which was at the same time thematically very close but structurally very distinct. On the other hand, various *chansonniers* of the thirteenth century have preserved two reworkings, attributed to Audefroï le Bâtard, quite different from each other, and based on the text of Jean Renart or on a variant. We have either four texts of the same "work" or two "works," the second of which is an imitation of the first, each of them being realized in two non-identical texts. This is an initial uncertainty, which theoretically can be resolved by a philological and codicological analysis. Whatever the conclusion may be, we at least touch here upon what I call the *mouvance* of the work. Beyond the rather considerable variants which distinguish them, the texts in question have in common certain elements of versification, a structure which I shall call "lyric," a general narrative outline, a typical vocabulary, and—in large part—their textual syntax, by which I mean a method of composing and of linking up motifs.

In addition, there are resemblances, less numerous but equally distinct, which link this "work" or these two "works" to a dozen other texts, preserved in various manuscripts. The most important of these resemblances resides in their initial strophe, which sets forth a narrative theme which is transformed in the following strophes. This similarity is established at the level of a kind of generative formula which could be designated as follows:

X at (in) Y /does/ (and) /thinks of (=loves)/ Z (and) /is troubled/  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

X and Z are lexemes of the class "living human beings," Y designates a place, and the terms between slashes are semic categories. Although the order of the terms 1 to 4 may vary, these elements are always grouped together; 5 may remain implicit, simply suggested by 7; 6 may appear only late in the text. The realization of these elements involves quite numerous options (I print in italics those realized in *Bele Aiglentine*):

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{X} \\ \text{(subject of the sentence)} \end{array} = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{feminine common noun} \\ \text{woman's proper name} \end{array} \right. \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{literary in nature} \\ \text{popular name} \end{array} \right.$$
$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Y} \\ \text{(complement of place)} \end{array} = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{residence} \\ \text{nature (water)} \end{array} \right. \quad \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{room} \\ \text{tower} \end{array} \right.$$
$$/does/ = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{sewing (verb + complement)} \\ \text{other domestic work} \\ \text{singing (verb)} \end{array} \right\} \text{work}$$



Z	=	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{personalized} \\ \text{universalized (love)} \end{array} \right\}$	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{masculine common noun ("ami")} \\ \text{man's proper name} \end{array} \right\}$
/is troubled/	=	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{distraction, error} \\ \text{tears, fainting} \end{array} \right\}$	

The last option is lexically and syntactically determined; the elements of the lexical layer corresponding to X, Y and to "sewing" are always borrowed from one of the variants of a typical model. I shall limit myself to applying the expression "*chanson de toile*" only to the group of texts which are defined (or engendered) this way.

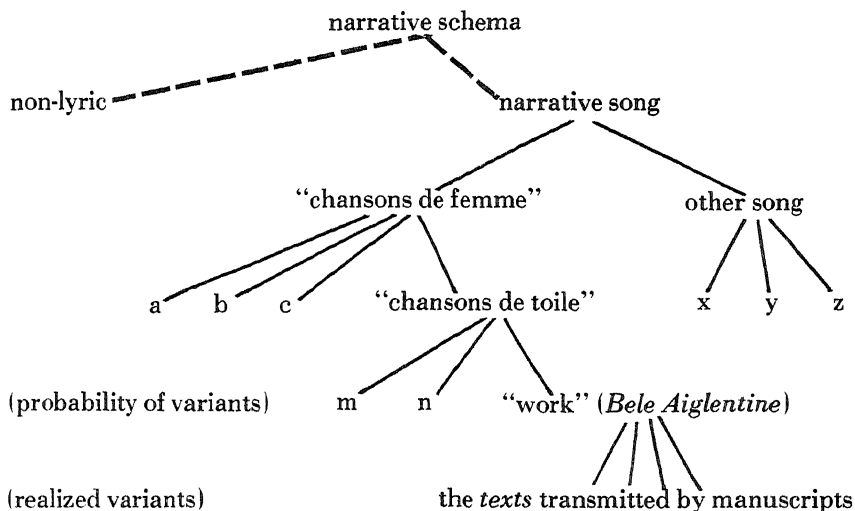
At a higher level of generality, we find, between this group and several other texts, a common trait which groups them together very strongly, against the rest of the corpus; on the two levels (narrative and lyric) where it operates, the discourse has a young woman as subject (in the grammatical and logical meaning of the word); such is the case in the so-called *mal-mariée* songs, in songs of nuns, and in several "*romances*" (this term being an invention of nineteenth century philologists). In this regard, certain medievalists speak of "*chansons de femme*," which could have been of very old tradition and, geographically, widely diffused.

But, in turn, the "*chansons de femme*" are only a sub-division of a larger whole, which could include a good part of what Bartsch grouped together, a century ago, under the vague title of "*Romanzen und Pastourellen*": a group unified by the fact that a narrative exposition is set forth by the song, which consists in turn of a melodic structure based on a strophic rhythm. It therefore differs from a simple recitative or scanned declamation: this seems to be proved, in the absence of musical notation, by the versification. The implications of this fact are considerable. Theoretically, the same narrative schema could be developed independently in the form of a tale; in fact, it is not, and that is a most remarkable point.

Starting from the texts of *Bele Aiglentine* we can thus trace an outline of a vertical classification, in which the upper zone has a purely theoretical and problematical character (see table on page 34).

The value of the distinctions thus drawn is not identical from the top to the bottom of this schema: the fact designated by level 1 is not of the same nature as those implied by level 2; the various units of levels 3, 4, and 5 do not necessarily adopt the same narrative schema. It is thus less a question of levels of realization than of levels of analysis.

At what level can we speak of "class," or even of "genre"? At 3 or 4, indeed at 5 or even 2? We could find valid arguments in favor of each of these answers. In fact, this schema illustrates the concept of *tradition*, which is nothing but the mode of existence of the various levels. Levels 2 to 5 account for what can be its functioning; in this sense, then, they are real levels.



The existence of traditional types of expression is verifiable, by comparison, at levels 3 and 4 no less than at level 5; at 2, the situation is less clear, since at that level we have not yet reached the zone of figurative realization: there, we consider functions more than forms: at least, there is already the question of the *level of discourse* at which the traditional elements will be actualized. Chances of realization of these elements increase as we approach the "work," from 3 to 4 and then to 5. To the same extent, the discourse narrows and its own structural characteristics become clearer.

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It would be difficult to establish such a representative tree for all texts: the applicable levels of classification are not always of the same number, and the elements of chance which have prevailed in the transmission of the texts sometimes lead to unexpected developments.

The extreme, but not exceptional, case is the one in which, from all appearances, a single text represents a group that has otherwise disappeared, with the result that its relations with the other groups cannot be determined. Such is the case for this small work of a rare perfection *Aucassin et Nicolette*. Its anonymous author himself calls it a "*chante-fable*," a generic term the content of which we do not understand, for want of any element of comparison.

However, it must be admitted that, generally speaking, the manifestation of a medieval poetic text is the conclusion of a process analogous to that which my chart suggests. One could object that, to a large extent, this is true for any text and that this fact is too universal to characterize medieval poetry; perhaps it does not even contain anything specifically literary, but results from the plurality of semiotic structures. However, the strength of tradition as a factor in the production of medieval poetic texts makes of each level a real stage in the process of formalization, so much so that we can

theoretically attribute equal value to all of them. At each of these stages we find a certain number of possibilities of choice (a positive concept); that is, of increasing restrictions (a negative concept), and the author's initiative crumbles in these successive operations, which undoubtedly become more and more conscious as we approach the surface (level 6).

That is why it is only with the greatest prudence that we can extend to the Middle Ages the modern concept of the individual work as an anti-genre: it is an actualized "genre," implying the totality of the latter, meant as such by the author and recognized as such by the listeners. The functioning of this system varies only with the coherence of levels 3 and 4. Level 6 comprises the texts of the corpus, which we shall consider to be discontinuous, isolated, and in that sense intemporal occurrences. On the other hand, levels 1 to 4, which exist in tradition, have their own diachrony. Level 5 partakes of these two species. Everything preceding it hierarchically constitutes a "historization" of the form, which in this manner is transmitted, reproduced, modified. These movements, residing in the system, manifest themselves, according to the circumstances, at one or another of the levels in question. New models were formed, either at a very high level (the *chanson*, without doubt, around 1100), or at an intermediate level, thanks to lexical transformations (*fatrasie*, in the second half of the thirteenth century); regroupings integrated simple forms in a more complex or higher principle of organization, scissions occurred, break-ups of archaic models creating from that point on two distinct series; originally autonomous models became subordinated to other models, in relation to which they thereafter fulfilled a dependent function; as an ensemble of options, they slipped from a rather high level to a lower level. This is the case for the archaic martial *planctus*, which became an ornament of the epic; also for the very old spring songs, which with the first troubadours became an introductory type of the *vers*.<sup>9</sup>

For this very reason it is impossible to detach the interpretation of individual texts from a history of forms. Whether we speak of genres, of codes, or, as I have done, of classes, these terms not only refer to ensembles of elements, but also embrace a more general model.

As such, this model contains its own *signifié*, integrated into all these realizations. This *signifié* can be simply "epic" or "heroic story" or "the knight at war," and it is common to all *chansons de geste*. The coherence of the ensemble appears stronger, however, at the level of the elements than at that of the model. Therefore, it can happen that structures which are superficially very similar correspond to different models, which are, moreover, difficult to define by opposing them to each other. This is the case, at the archaic period, for the *Boeci* or the *Sainte-Foy*, which are hard to distinguish formally from the epic; and, as an even better example, for certain parts of the romance cycle of *Alexandre*, composed in the form of a *chanson de geste*. In other words, the coherence found in the text is only partially realized in the model. In regard to the ensemble in which it is placed, the text always contains unexpected elements. This explains the impossibility of adopting a static principle of classification; it is thus

necessary, although difficult, to have recourse to criteria related to the very dynamism of this poetry.

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## NOTES

1. This article was translated from the French by Margriet Bruyn Lacy.
2. "La Transformation de la forme allégorique entre 1180 et 1240," *L'Humanisme médiéval* (Paris, 1964), p. 120.
3. "Les Troubadours et les lais," *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, 85 (1969), 1-44.
4. K. Bartsch and A. Horning, *La Langue et la littérature françaises du XI<sup>e</sup> au XV<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris, 1887), p. 610.
5. H. R. Jauss, *Littérature médiévale et théorie des genres: Poétique*, I, 1970, p. 94.
6. *Le opere di Dante, testo critico*, Società Dantesca italiana (Florence, 1960), pp. 316-17.
7. P. Zumthor, "De la chanson au récit: la *Châtelaine de Vergi*," *Vox Romanica*, 27 (1968), 90-95.
8. *Travaux de linguistique et de littérature*, 8 (1970).
9. R. Dragonetti, *La Technique poétique des trouvères* (Gand, 1960), p. 186.

# South Welsh Geography and British History in the *Perlesvaus*

J. NEALE CARMAN

The *Perlesvaus* repeatedly indicates that events which it narrates take place in Wales. Pennevoiseuse is "en Gales" (4002),<sup>1</sup> "siet sur la mer de Gales" (572), "sor la mer de Gales" (3871). "Cil Camaalos qui fu a la Veve Dame [as distinguished from the Camaalot of most authors] seoit au cief de la plus sauvage isle de Gales pres de la mer devers Occident" (7281-83). The "Vaus" dependent upon this Camaalot contain "les plus riches chastiaux qui soient en Gales" (1136-37). There is "ou roiaume de Gales. . . i. chastel qui soet desor la mer sor une haute roche et estoit apelez li Chasteaux des Jalies" (3889-91). And there is "la Clef de Gales" (3250). Finally at Saint Austin's Chapel lives "li plus preudom ermites qui soit o roiaume de Gales" (98); the chapel is a day's ride plus two or three hours from Cardueil (184-203, 257-72), Arthur's capital in this romance along with Pennevoiseuse.

Elsewhere,<sup>2</sup> by means of the character of the names and the description of the spots, I maintained that Camaalot and Pennevoiseuse occupied the sites of Camros and Penarth. For Camaalot the article also called attention to the similarity between *Perlesvaus's* vengeance on the Sire des Mares and an episode in the Camros area, vengeance exacted for the murder of Gerald FitzWilliam. This parallel has seemed convincing to readers. I also set forth the resemblance between the visit of the Damsel of the Cart to Pennevoiseuse and a Saxon's prophecy in Cardiff to Henry II of the impending revolt of the King's sons. Not all readers have approved this second parallel. I do not withdraw it, but it is not an essential point in the place identification. Topographical descriptions along with onomastic similarities here are the important bases of geographical determinations. Once a geographical identity in a romance has been revealed, the history touching that spot may illuminate the meanings and techniques of the author.

The author of the *Perlesvaus*, as a guide to us in measuring distances, states how much time travel takes; he also makes a few allusions to Welsh leagues. If reliance is to be placed on such data it is necessary to examine how statements fit together. In the *Perlesvaus* the dovetailing does not always occur. There are sections where the geography is purely imaginary, and others where the chronology is fanciful. The transformation of Meliot de Logres from a child seven years old (1580) to an armed knight (3331-40) while *Perlesvaus* is recovering from a wound has caused readers to regard all statements concerning time in the romance as probably absurd. But what happens within a day or series of days conforms to chronological realism. Whenever the author is specific about topographic features and reasonable about distances and about chronology, his statements deserve examination. The bizarre features, as in the case of Meliot, are related to symbolism, which takes precedence in the romance over all other considerations. When

symbolism is absent or exacting no aberrations, the *Perlesvaus* is habitually realistic.

In the first division of the discussion to follow statements in the *Perlesvaus* as to distances and direction of travel along with descriptive details reinforce the conclusion that Pennevoiseuse was located where Penarth is, and Camaalot where Camros is; furthermore they allow a few additional identifications. Topographical data sometimes suggest investigation of historical background. But historical allusions in the *Perlesvaus* do not always depend importantly upon topography. The second and third divisions of this study deal with cases where some testimony to place incidence exists, but in which the evidence for a relation between the romance and, first institutional, and then ecclesiastical, history does not depend upon precise location. The fourth division discusses much of Branch X as a reflection of both particular events in various places and political characteristics extending from 1170 to the time of composition of the *Perlesvaus*.

## I

The ship that first brings Perlesvaus to Pennevoiseuse comes along the coast, "contreval la marine" (4082), that is, as it approaches, it must be sailing where water is deep close to shore. The hero's ship docks at Arthur's castle, where a usable roadstead is formed by the deep water near land. So much I said elsewhere,<sup>3</sup> and also that water and shore conditions at Penarth fit this situation. The detailed Ordnance Survey maps reveal the fact,<sup>4</sup> but here is corroborating evidence drawn from articles by George Thomas Clark: "At the mouths of the Taff and the Ely protected by the headland of Penarth, the roadstead has been connected with artificial docks."<sup>5</sup> Later Clark quotes from a state paper of the 19th of September, 1578, which deals with thieves who came ashore to steal a pig. The paper speaks of a ship which lay at "anchore in the Roade of Penarth . . . not far from the shore." In combination with the character of the name, these geographical facts are, I believe, convincing evidence that Pennevoiseuse stands for Penarth. Discussion on distances to other points, to be presented later, reinforces the conclusion.

Perlesvaus's visit to Arthur's castle at Pennevoiseuse comes soon after his first approach to the sea at the Chastel des Jalias. He defeats the King of Castle Mortal in single combat on an island near the castle. Islands along the South Welsh coast are found near Tenby (Caldy Island) not far from the western tip and on a short stretch where the coast turns westward somewhat south of Penarth. The islands there are Sully, Barry, and Little Island beside Barry. On the mainland by Sully there was a medieval castle, and the island itself is small enough to be the analogue of that on which the duel took place. From Sully Island it would be appropriate that in going to Penarth a ship should sail "contreval la marine" (4082-83), as Perlesvaus's did in approaching Pennevoiseuse. After taking the shield from Arthur's hall, Perlesvaus made his headquarters on the island and patrolled the coast. He

"a adés nagié par la mer et cerchié totes les illes et plessiez toz les orguellex tant qu'il est dotez et cremuz par tot les roiaumes" (4209-10). In other words he acted as a police officer for the district. Historically the area for a space westward beyond Cardiff needed such coverage; incursions from the hills were chronic.

The *Perlesvaus* is certainly ecclesiastically oriented. The sacred character of the Castle of Pennevoiseuse is sufficiently shown by the fact that there the Damsel of the Cart leaves the Red Cross Shield (622-27), which "senefie l'escu de la croiz que nus n'osa achater, se Diex non" (2199). *Perlesvaus* bears it at the conquest of the Grail Castle. Since Pennevoiseuse has a sacred function, one may suspect that the author chose its location partly because Penarth was so near the episcopal see of Llandaff, now practically part of Cardiff.

Similarly, the castle of Iglais, whose name identifies her with the Church, should be near the ecclesiastical capital of Wales. In situating his Camaalot "au cief de la plus sauvage isle de Gales, pres de la mer, devers Occident" (7282-83), the author must have been thinking of a spot near St. David's in the far west of South Wales. Its bishop even sought to deny the authority of Canterbury; there says Vyvyan Rees, "the landscape is bare and windswept, with outcrops of rock and rare trees,"<sup>6</sup> "sauvage" indeed. The words of the author of the *Perlesvaus* on the location of Camaalot conform so accurately to the character of St. David's that it would seem that the Castle of Camaalot should be as "pres de la mer" as St. David's is, but the description of its site when Gawain first sees it, "avironnez de granz iaues e de granz praeries e de riche forest" (1010-11) shows that it had been built further inland, that is, at Camros as the name suggests. The sacred nature of the spot where Iglais resides and where the body and relics of Nicodemus lie is obvious, even though the Veve Dame and her daughter Dandrane go for their last days to the Grail Castle, taking with them "le cors qui gisoit o sarqueu devant le chastel de Kamaalot" (10120). After *Perlesvaus*'s last visit,

Sa mere demora e sa suer grant piece a Kamaalot, e menerent bone vie e sainte. La dame fist faire une chapele mout riche au sarkeu qui gisoit entre la forest e Kamaalot, e la fist aorner de riches vestemenz, e estora un chapelain qui chascun jor li chantoit messe. Puis fu li lius si edefiez, ce dist li estoires, que il i ot abeie a gent de religion; e encore tesmoignent li pluisor que ele i est molt riche. (8927-33)

There was no abbey at Camros, nor within twenty miles of it. At St. David's the religious body was a chapter of canons. At about the same distance from Camros in the opposite direction there was a chapter of Knights Hospitalers at Slebech. The expression "abeie a gent de religion" is rather peculiar; "abeie" alone would have sufficed. The author seems to have had in mind something different from an abbey in the strict sense. The history of spoliations committed against Iglais corresponds to events in the career of St. David's; the present tense in "elei est molt riche" fits the prosperity accorded Slebech by donations of Lord Rhys late in the twelfth century.

The author of the *Perlesvaus*, in establishing Camaalot and Pennevoiseuse as Welsh sites for sacred episodes in his romance, uses for each the same technique: (1) He says specifically that they are in Wales. (2) He chooses locations near the episcopal sees in South Wales, St. David's and Llandaff, and also (3) near centers of Plantagenet power, Pembroke and Cardiff, consistently held by the Normans and visited by Henry II.<sup>7</sup> (4) He erects there castles of his imagining, inventing names related to the toponyms of the actual locations, and (5) making use of the geographic features of those places. (6) He provides episodes reminiscent of historic incidents that took place in the neighborhood.

Camaalot turned out to be the destination of Gawain in a two-day ride. At its start, Gawain for a while becomes the escort of the Damsel of the Cart. On the day they meet, St. John's Day, Midsummer Eve, at dinner time she had appeared at Arthur's court at Pennevoiseuse. The description of sunshine effects shows that dinner was at noon. As soon as her errand was done, the Damsel left and went into the country ".vii. liues galesches" (696). There she came upon Gawain and asked him to journey with her past the Castle of the Black Hermit. He complied. For some time their road led through pleasant country; then they entered a forest of desolation. Gawain, abhorring it, asked its extent. The reply was, "Ele dure bien .x. liues galesches, mes ne les oterrez pas totes" (743-44). "Il chevauchent tant qu'il viennent en une grant valee" (746), and there was the Black Hermit's castle "o regort d'un grant val" (747). Down this secondary "val" a stream tumbles "si ledement bruiant que ce sanbloit estre esfodres de tonnoire (752-53). When, after combat, the party has gone beyond the castle a league (854), the paths of knight and damsel separate, and they bid each other farewell.

The Vale of Ely seems appropriate to Gawain's journey with the Damsel of the Cart, though there is now no burnt-over country along it. Northwest from Cardiff it is wide for some ten miles; over a like distance it narrows, and farther back it becomes nearly canyon-like in character. Streams run into it, furnishing sites such as are necessary for the Black Hermit's castle. The road up it runs over a ridge and forks. Here is George Thomas Clark's description of the vale—coming downstream this time: "The Ely or Afon Lai rises . . . under Pen-rhiw-fer upon the southwestern skirts of Mynydd Mailug. In the gorge of Mynydd Mailug it receives the Mychydd from Gwan Castelau [and soon other affluents]; after which it flows down a broad valley of great pastoral beauty."<sup>8</sup>

The interior of the Black Hermit's castle is described much later in the romance. Its most salient feature is the pit into which the defeated Black Hermit is cast by his followers; "la graindre pueurs en oissi que nus sentist onques" (9990). In Glamorgan a similar phenomenon of nature certainly existed; there are in the area evil-smelling mineral springs, sulphur. Also coal outcroppings glowing and reeking from fires kindled by spontaneous combustion or from burning forests could have been polluting the atmosphere at the appropriate point along the Ely. According to Clark, and



geological maps uphold him, the northern two-thirds of Glamorgan is underlain with coal. "The southern edge of this basin is formed by the uplifting of the carboniferous limestone" (p. 9); hence, outcrops. The details of the Harrowing of Hell in the *Evangelium Nicodemi* would be a sufficient explanation of the stinking pit, but the combination of this offensive hole with outside topography such as the *Perlesvaus* describes would likely have occurred to an author only if he had found gorge and well of stench together near his eyes and nose.

After leaving the Damsel of the Cart, Gawain's road led through pleasant country. At sunset in this season when days are longest, he reaches a hermitage (882) and spends the night. The next day he rides on "desq'a heure de midi" (978). Then he meets a youth, and inquires where he may find shelter. The answer is: "Ge n'i sé recet des[c'a].xx. liues galesches en vostre voie. Vos n'i avez que targier, car pres est de nonne" (997-99). Gawain covers the twenty leagues by nightfall on this twenty-fifth of June: "il avoit grant jornee fete" (1030). Then he comes upon the Castle of Camaalot "pres de la mer, devers Occident" (7283). The insistence on the time data for Gawain's long rides reflects the author's understanding of the distance from Penarth or Llandaff to Camros or St. David's, some one hundred road miles by the route that the traveler followed. If he had no such itinerary in mind, it would be difficult to explain why he is so specific about distance and time.

The *valet* whom Gawain met at noon was Clamador des Ombres. He went on to Arthur's court at Pennevoiseuse where the king knighted him. When after a few days he left the king, he "chevaucha grant piece de tens tant qu'il vint au chief d'une forest, et choisi sa voie parmi entre .ii. montaignes, et vit que passer le covenoit parmi la valee, qui molt estoit parfonde" (3078-80). He found there the Damsel of the Cart and her equipage waiting for some one to escort them through the "destroit la ou nus n'ose passer" (3088). The gorge (destroit) was defended by a lion. Clamador killed it, and the party passed through the defile. They rode on without an overnight stop until they reached the camp of the Queen of the Tents.

The more important of the two streams coming out of the mountains and reaching the sea "under Penarth" is the River Taff. Like the Ely, its lower course is through rather flat country; above, says Clark, "it escapes from the mountains by the defile of the Garth." Its upper valley is deep and narrow. The "large piece of time" that Clamador traveled before his road obliged him to pass between two mountains could apply well to the hour or two that it would take to cover the eight or nine miles from the Taff-Ely estuary to the defile where the Taff "escapes from the mountains." It is just below the present railroad station of Taff's Well. The road beyond, on leaving the Taff, climbs past the Brecon Beacons and descends into the valley of the Usk. The distance from Cardiff to Brecon on the Usk is about 40 road miles, a long but possible day's journey for Clamador. The damsels, hardened to eternal movement, did not have so far to go, since they were already at the defile when Clamador came up. Brecon and its environs fit the description of the holdings of the Queen of the Tents. The travelers of the *Perlesvaus*

"aprochent .i. chastel molt riche et soet enmi une praerie, et estoit avironee de granz eues et de granz forez" (3146-48). Brecon Castle is precisely at the "aber," junction, of the Usk and the Honddu; the "great waters" are there. And the gentle Vale of Usk lies all around.

The Queen of the Tents gained her name because she and all her retinue had moved out of the castle into an extensive camp on the forest's edge. The camp was surrounded by "un blanc drap, et sembloit estre de loing molt crestelez et duroit bien li enclose une liue galesche" (3153-54). Within there were no men, only beautiful ladies and damsels making merry. Another analogue of fairies disporting on a woodland meadow? Of course. But what shall we say of the size of this encampment and the effort to imitate a walled city with a white cloth fence that seemed "crestelez"? Some two miles above Brecon is Brecknock Mere, of whose waters marvelous things were told by Giraldus Cambrensis. Daniel Defoe says further, "The country people affirm there stood a city once here but that by the judgment of heaven, for the sin of the inhabitants, it sunk into the earth and the water rose up in place of it."<sup>10</sup> Another common piece of folklore is here localized, but that fact detracts nothing from the analogy between the doomed lacustrian town and the *Perlesvaus*'s merry city walled with cloth. Both are evanescent, for the romance reports later that the camp has been struck (3881). In the *Perlesvaus* the notion of a sinful locale is not far from the surface. The family of the Seigneur des Ombres, enemies of *Perlesvaus* and hence among the reprobates, included the Queen of the Tents. Whether or not the author of the *Perlesvaus* was presenting a version of a fairy domain under sentence for sin, his picture of the large gathering around the Queen could have been influenced by the knowledge that annually at the beginning of August many people came together from afar to Brecon for the feast of St. Elined; Giraldus says, "Eodem die multi de plebe longinquis ex partibus convenire solent."<sup>11</sup>

The camp of the Roïne des Tentés is not far from the Clef de Gales. At least *Perlesvaus* left the Key in the morning and arrived at the tents early enough so that many things happened before bedtime. Thus the Key to Wales is by any calculation less than two days' journey from Pennevoiseuse (a day for Clamador plus a fraction of a day for *Perlesvaus*). Since Pennevoiseuse "siet sur la mer de Gales," in order to locate the Key, we cannot go as far north as Oswestry, where, without supporting evidence from the romance, William A. Nitze's edition of the *Perlesvaus* placed it (II, 206). A key fortress should be situated, as the Clef de Gales is, at "l'entree de la terre" (3251) so as to control roads leading to a large back country, such as those running up the River Usk. As the Usk leaves Wales, it flows past Abergavenny, which, to be the model for the *Perlesvaus*'s Clef de Gales, is at a proper distance from the south coast and also from Brecon. At the town there was a well-known castle and another one three miles south at Castell Arnallt where a fortress had existed from prehistoric times.

Let us recall *Perlesvaus*'s adventure at the Clef de Gales. Of right it belonged to his mother, but it had been seized by "Cahoth li Roux" (3208),

her enemy and Perlesvaus's, for, said Cahot, "vos oceïstes mon frere, le segnor de la forest des Onbres" (3207). He is speaking to Perlesvaus when the latter has entered the castle at the end of a day's journey. Cahot further declares to his guest that he will kill him. The traveler protests that an attack upon him when he is seeking shelter for the night would be a violation of the law of hospitality, "si en seriez trop blasmez se vos me fesiez mal" (3211). Cahot is obdurate. In the ensuing combat, Perlesvaus kills him. The retainers of the fallen man have admired their master, but they accept Perlesvaus's dominion as being rightful, since he is the son of the lawful mistress. Thus, feudal property laws are emphasized. The ethic of hospitality is stated firmly in the dialogue before the combat. Cahot dies because he ignores it, even though he is undertaking to avenge his brother.

These themes of vengeance and hospitality were bound up with well-known events at Abergavenny late in the twelfth century. At the root lay the question as to who were the proper lords in the country, the Welsh or the Normans. Early in 1175 at Castell Arnallt, where he was a guest, the Anglo-Norman lord, Henry of Hereford, was slain by a retainer of Siesyllt, the Welsh lord of the Castell. Late in the same year William de Braose, Henry's nephew, invited the Welsh noble and his men to the Castle of Abergavenny, where William had just established himself. The invitation was accepted, and the Anglo-Normans murdered the whole party. The most striking difference between this recital and that in the *Perlesvaus* is that the wronged guest survives in the romance. Though in it the right to vengeance is sacred and the duty to exact it pressing, the implication here is that the laws of hospitality take precedence over the right to vengeance.

Whatever the ideological background may be, in view of the analogy between Perlesvaus's exploit against Cahot and the events leading to the death of Siesyllt, and because of the spatial hints as to the location of the Clef de Gales, it seems reasonable to situate the fortress of the romance at Abergavenny.

Abergavenny, Brecon, Penarth-Cardiff-Llandaff, Sully Island, Camros-St. David's: these models for locations in the *Perlesvaus* are all in South Wales, none deep within it. All are in areas frequented by the Anglo-Norman conquerors of the borderlands and of most of the southern coast.

## II

When Perlesvaus leaves the Clef de Gales, he goes to the cloth-walled precinct of the Queen of the Tents. The location of her camp has little to do with what transpires there save that we must conceive of the action as taking place in a truly Welsh environment. The events concern four characters, each of whom has his special rôle: Perlesvaus, the Queen, Clamador and Meliot de Logres. The body of adventures in which they interact occupies all but the first fifth of Branch VII (3032-3428).

In this branch, after Perlesvaus has killed Cahot, his rôle is passive. Neglecting any religious symbolism, he is here only a handsome young knight with rights of feudal lordship in the neighborhood, participant in

spite of himself in a vendetta. He had, still a youth, thrown a javelin against a knight, thinking that it could not penetrate armor, but the weapon had killed the knight, the Vermeil Chevalier, Seigneur des Ombres. Cahot, as the dead man's brother, has warred against Perlesvaus's family. Clamador, as the dead man's son, pursues a killer who, he himself declares, is the best knight in the world. The Queen of the Tents, as the sister-in-law of the Seigneur des Ombres (3176), should also be intent on vengeance.

At the time of his unhappy stroke, Perlesvaus was carrying his javelin "comme Galois" (491). As a hunter, his methods are "comme Galois" (465), since he has grown up in Wales. An uncle's widow describes him as a "chevalier en la terre de Gales" (9702). But, though reared in Wales with lands in Wales and penetrated by Welsh mores, he is never labeled Welsh—his aunt did not say "chevalier galois." He is not of Welsh stock. The habitats of none of his eleven paternal uncles (47-52) can be identified as in Wales. "Li rois Ben de Benui fu cosins germains vostre pere" (3013), and Benoit is a distant land (9708). Joseph of Arimathea was his mother's uncle (23), certainly not of Welsh origin. Perlesvaus is then part of the foreign stock grafted on Wales, in other words, the equivalent of an Anglo-Norman lord.

The territorial history of his family is similar to theirs. His father had held broad lands in the west of Wales, but the son is named Per[d]-les-vaus because his father thought it fitting; "li Sires des Mares li toloit la greigneur partie des Vax de Kamaalot" (461). Iglais was reduced to her stronghold at Camaalot by the time our romance begins. Similarly the de Clare family had conquered most of southwest Wales early in the twelfth century, but by 1160 their holdings there had been reduced to Pembroke and smaller fiefs near it. Perlesvaus delivers his mother from her enemies, and she dwells in peace, but the romance says nothing of her regaining territory. In like manner after 1172, when Welsh Lord Rhys settled his differences with Henry II, the de Clares and other Anglo-Normans in South Wales accepted the *status quo* and were for over a decade at relative peace with their Welsh neighbors.

Richard de Clare was more frequently known as Earl of Striguil than Earl of Pembroke. Striguil is the present Chepstow at the east edge of Monmouthshire. This lordship, also known as Nether Went, became Richard de Clare's after 1138. From this time his family had lands in both far western and far eastern South Wales. Iglais also has holdings far from Camaalot; it is on the western sea, la Clef de Gales is on the English border. The latter castle is always qualified as Iglais's, not as part of Perlesvaus's paternal inheritance. As a parallel, Striguil came to the de Clares by inheritance on the distaff side. Without representing any particular de Clare, Perlesvaus seems the fictional representative of a member of that family.

We may divine a curious ambiguity in the attitude of the *Perlesvaus* to the neighbor of Striguil, William de Braose. In the drama at Abergavenny, both sides betrayed guests. William de Braose's deed awakened general horror because it was a massacre of many; the murder that provoked him drew less attention. Undoubtedly the author of the romance condemned all such conduct, but possibly, by making a single man the offended party at la

Clef de Gales, he wished to contend that whether one or many were attacked the principle was the same. Thus his readers might arrive at some abatement in their revulsion against the treacherous massacre by the Normans.

Even if the *Perlesvaus* was not written by a client of the de Clares, he seems to have been a partisan of the Normans. His hero's enemies must then be romanticized scions of the native Welsh aristocracy. Among them should be the Queen of the Tents. At one point we are told: "*Perlesvax est ou roiaume de Logres, et s'en venoit grant aleüre vers la terre la Roïne des Tentès*" (3813-15). This statement seems to say that the hero was in England and "*s'en venoit*" to reach the land of the Tent Camp. Its Queen, at first sight of Perlesvaus, falls passionately in love with him and entreats him to become hers. If he had been willing, their union would have been complete. Intermarriages between the Anglo-Normans and the great Welsh families were a common occurrence; the Queen of the Tents with her uninhibited love-making seems particularly reminiscent of Nest, the fabulously beautiful Welsh princess of the twelfth century who became the wife or concubine of several Normans and a Welshman or two besides.

Clamador, the nephew of the Queen, reproaches her bitterly for her fond reception of Perlesvaus, "*vostre ennemi mortel et le mien*" (3305). Clamador's Welsh origins might be a matter of debate, for he describes his father as "*le meilleur chevalier qui fust o roiaume de Logres*" (988). Except in the name Meliot de Logres, Logres in the *Perlesvaus* occurs only in the phrase "*roiaume de Logres*" (once ten lines after "*roiaume de Logres*," there is "*forest de Logres*," 4922, again 4931). Sometimes the phrase seems to apply specifically to England (1607, see below; 3874, see above; 7285, probably 4921, 7151); sometimes, particularly when used with a superlative as in the description of Clamador's father, it refers to a vaguer realm (1232, 3593, 6104, 10031). The larger, less precise sense is particularly demonstrated by the description of the Lady of Petit Gomaret who, at the end of the first day's travel from Camaalot in extreme western Wales, harbors Gawain for the night. It is she "*qui la plus bele est e la plus sage du roiaume de Logres*" (1231-32). She is thus at once in Logres and in Wales. Since the Seigneur des Ombres was in Western Wales at the time of his death, presumably that was his habitat. Clamador was coming out of the west toward Arthur's court at Pennevoiseuse when Gawain met him as he was riding toward Camaalot. Of course the Norman lords in South Wales also lived there and journeyed from there, but here are other indications of Clamador's Welsh identity. His mother, a sister of the amorous Queen of the Tents, can hardly be aught but Welsh. As the hereditary enemy of Perlesvaus, a representative in the romance of the Anglo-Normans, we may safely place him among the Welsh.

When Clamador demands the right to a judicial duel with Perlesvaus, the Queen puts him off until the next day. Meliot de Logres then appears to save her from the displeasure of pitting her nephew against the man she loves. Meliot too demands a judicial duel—with Clamador, because the lion killed at the defile out from Pennevoiseuse had been his. Meliot is called "de

Logres" because the Lady of Petit Gomaret, his mother, "fu fille a un riche conte du roiaume de Logres" (1606-07). He is repeatedly entitled a vassal of Gawain,<sup>12</sup> which would indicate that he held lands outside of Wales, but his lion was established on Welsh land. Meliot is then an Anglo-Norman lord with holdings on both sides of the border.

The legal case regarding the lion has been carefully prepared. At the defile a youth has accused Clamador of 'molt grant outrage' in killing the animal. The victor urges self-defense, and adds, "Vostre sire lui deüst avoir enchaené puis qu'il l'amoit tant" (3133). It was blocking a road. "Sire, fait li vallez, cho n'est mie chemins par chi, ains est une terre par defois que l'en velt tolir mon segnor, et por la venue de ses enemis lesoit on le lion fors de la chaene" (3134-36). This statement of the right to defend against trespass smacks of Norman legalism in confrontation with the roving Welsh.

Legal niceties are observed throughout Branch VII. The Queen does not give Meliot priority for the duel without long argument (3340-64), during which Clamador becomes irritated to the point of being willing to fight over the question of property first. He eventually dies of wounds inflicted by Meliot. However, Perlesvaus is obliged to leave the Damsel of the Cart as a hostage for his return in case of the wounded man's recovery. The Damsel is released only after Clamador's death (3877-80). The hostage institution was flourishing ca. 1200; King John was particularly fond of it. The insistence on the atmosphere of courtroom procedures in the events at the Camp of the Tents stands out particularly because it is not salient in other parts of the *Perlesvaus*.

The attitude of the author toward the hereditary enemies of his hero is curious. They are obviously among the reprobates, evil in character in the case of the Sire des Mares, and, perhaps with qualifications, in that of Cahot le Rous. On the other hand Clamador is from beginning to end a likeable lad; the reader is glad that he is not granted the encounter with Perlesvaus that he so much desires. The author also spares us the spectacle of Meliot gloating over his death. The boy is simply on the wrong side. The portrait of the Queen of the Tents is also that of an amiable being—with unrestricted sexual appetites to be sure—hospitable, though, toward Perlesvaus, Meliot, and the Damsel of the Cart as well as to her own kin. I am inclined to believe that the author of the *Perlesvaus* not only was acquainted with the topography of South Wales, but also knew the Welsh, recognizing that, though they were enemies of his kind, many had good points.

The episode of Arthur's Chapel Ride and the account of the wars against Brien des Isles do not take away our attention altogether from the South Welsh scene, but they inject broader political implications into the romance.

### III

"La Chapele Saint Augustin . . . est en la Blanche Forest, que on ne puet trover se par aventure non" (91-2). It is, however, in Wales, since its hermit lives in that country. Its distance from Cardueil, as established by the time required for Arthur's ride to it, a day plus two or three hours, is the only

additional hint as to its location. Cardueil, I suggested in "The *Perlesvaus* and Bristol Channel," for this romance stands on the site of Caerleon; the evidence presented in that article still seems cogent to me (accessibility from Pennevoiseuse-Cardiff and Avalon-Glastonbury, retention of Caer-[cf. Camros, Cam-aalot, and Pen-arth, Pennevoiseuse] and replacement of the last syllable by -dueil, since Cardueil is the City of Grief, plus a local historical parallel further discussed later, p. 52). Accepting that identification, we must look for the Chapele in a neighboring part of Wales. The author clearly did not wish his readers to identify it with any specific church or monastery in the area, since he says that the Chapele, perhaps the Forest, is only to be found "par aventure," but he may well have been willing that they should have a concept of the general area. He speaks of the "Blanche Forest." In most northern Monmouthshire (Upper Gwent) about twenty miles from Caerleon, the ruins of White Castle (Llantilio in Welsh) are to be found. For a knight on a meandering search like Arthur's the distance is right. A few miles to the east of White Castle is Whitchurch in Herefordshire. The whiteness of the area in medieval opinion seems thus established; the Blanche Forest probably lies within it.

The problems presented by Arthur's Chapel Ride have attracted scholars in other domains than the geographical.<sup>14</sup> Miss Adolf opined that the episode reflected King John's submission to the Pope; Pierre Gallais, Henry II's. The author and his readers may have recollected both examples of royal submission to Papal authority, so that it is possible to accept both theses, though I attribute primary importance to M. Gallais's. The choice of the name for the chapel must have some significance, inasmuch as no saint except John and Andrew is mentioned elsewhere in the romance, and the author insists upon the name of the chapel by repeating it in full five times. There seems no doctrinal significance in the reference to St. Augustine; the probability is then that not the great African saint is meant but the patron of Canterbury. As soon as Canterbury and a king are mentioned together, Becket and Henry come first to mind and later Stephen Langton and John. The *Perlesvaus*'s allusion to Becket seems somewhat firmer because both history and romance display a royal pilgrimage of penance.

It seems to me, though, that the scholars' explanations of Arthur's "volonté delaiant" are insufficient. The romance first presents as the symptom of the lamentable state of will Arthur's loss of "le talent des largescs" (70). For medieval authors, except those of very noble blood, who were dispensers of largess and not receivers, the most irritating manifestation of misconduct was unwillingness to distribute gifts. It is not surprising then that the author of the *Perlesvaus* speaks of this fault first, but he later broadens the character of Arthur's sins. The king himself analyzes his state thus: "Ge n'é volenté de fere largesce ne chose qui tort a honeur; ainz m'est mes talenz muez en floibece de cuer" (88-90). The hermit who speaks to him during his pilgrimage tells him that he should be, what he is not, "essample de bien fere et de largesse et d'oneur" (335). After his journey, "talenz e volontez li fu revenuz . . . d'oneur e de largesce" (569-70). The word

"oneur" appears in these three statements; honor was achieved through "travaill." When the king returns to Cardueil, his queen commiserates his "paine." He replies, "Dame, ainsi le couvent soffrir as preudomes por honeur avoir, car a painnes puet on avoir oneur sanz travail" (553-55). Whatever the causes of his evil state were, his sin was simply sloth, as Nitze briefly remarks (II, 202).

For Henry II it would be hard to find any period in which he was truly slothful; he wore other people out with his eternal activity. On the other hand John was chronically slothful despite such flashes of energy as that which he displayed when, after a honeymoon that had been oblivious to all duty, he sprang into action to capture his nephew Arthur and the Poitevin nobles at Mirebeau in 1202. Between these two monarchs Richard reigned, a man habitually full of the will for action.

What afflicted Arthur was not chronic sloth, but an attack that was cured. Despite the usual restlessness of Henry and Richard there were in their lives moments when action seemed paralyzed. For instance in 1173 when the rebellion of Henry's sons was on the point of outbreak and he was receiving news of the gathering storm, he went on with his hunting and pursuit of sport without giving a sign of preparing for action. Probably guile rather than sloth accounted for his behavior, but to observers inaction was inexplicable. When the revolt actually began, the king's overt responses were all that honor demanded; expenditures skillfully placed, that is, largess, worked wonders for him. This alternation of quiescence and dynamism had no direct connection with penance, but the "pèlerinage de pénitence à Canterbury" of which M. Gallais speaks (p. 891) took place when it seemed to signal the victory that soon arrived.

Roger Howden speaks of acts of penitence by Richard on two occasions. The first was at Messina in 1191 after the Crusader had indulged in conduct unbefitting his mission. The dating of the second act of penitence is somewhat more difficult, but it was the result of the Lion Heart's conduct in 1194-95 at the end of his imprisonment in Germany and during the following period of residence in England. In Germany he consented to an act that was unpopular with his English subjects as humiliating the wearer of their crown. Richard did homage to the Emperor Henry VI for Burgundy, a province to which neither monarch had a claim, and where neither exerted any authority. As the English saw it, Richard could have consented to behave so only through sloth. On his return to his island realm, because he was in need of ready cash, he could not indulge in largess. But he found resources to lead a life that evoked reproaches in the short period while he was extracting what money he could from a land already bled for a ransom. His sins were worse than sloth, but could be explained as the result of his idleness while monetary levies were accumulating. Roger Howden tells that a hermit appeared before the king in those days, saying: "Esto memor subversionis Sodomaë, et ab te illicitis te abstine, sin autem, veniet super te ultio digna Dei." The king did not heed this warning at the moment, but later (Roger does not specify exactly when) he repented. "Convocatis coram



se viris religiosis vitae suae foeditatem confiteri non erubuit et accepta poenitentia, mulierem suam, quam a multo tempore non cognoverat, recepit et abjecto concubitu illicito, adhaesit uxore sua."<sup>15</sup> We may well believe that Queen Berengaria was one of those stimulating the "religious men" to bring the change about. The *Perlesvaus* gives no hint that Arthur failed to perform his marital duties, but Guenevere in this episode plays a part similar to the "viris religiosus" of Roger Howden. Indeed, Guenevere's share in setting Arthur on his way to the "Chapele Saint Augustin" is dominant (80-106), and is the only case in the whole romance where she is more than a passive figure. Though it is to reverse the order of events set by Roger Howden, it is possible to see an analogue to the chronicler's hermit in the damsel whom Arthur found at the Chapel. She does not recognize that he is the king, but, on learning that his name is Arthur, declares, "Or vos haz plus que devant, car vos avez le non du plus mauvés roi du mont" (518-19), and she acidly pursues the theme of King Arthur's "mauvestié" (519-36).

Miss Adolf and M. Gallais in my opinion have put too much stress on a resemblance between the Chapel Ride in the *Perlesvaus* and cases in which the Church took punitive measures to bring kings to heel. The impassable doorway of the Chapel may symbolize interdiction or excommunication, but it would not likely awaken in readers' minds recollections of such punishments. Impassable doorways in visions of miraculous masses were no novelty. The one that Lancelot confronts in the *Queste* is most effective; no one would think of finding a political parallel for it. To be sure, the public of the *Perlesvaus* would feel itself on familiar ground if it recognized that it was reading of a king defeated in resisting the Church. The examples of Philip Augustus of their own time and of sundry German emperors might be added to the Plantagenet cases. But John, Henry, Philip and the emperors were all humbled after a struggle over material power. Though the spectacle of royal penitence is certainly of great ideological interest in the Chapel ride, as a parallel to cases in which the penitence was as much for daring to withstand the Church as for other sin, the reminiscence in the romance is faint since there is no background of contention between temporal and spiritual authority. Arthur is atoning for his do-nothing state, his "volonté delaiant." His condition and acts seem more parallel to the Lion Heart's revulsions against his own conduct and his atonement by action than to Henry's or Philip's or John's unwilling submission to ecclesiastical might. Still, the element of a pilgrimage in Henry II's humiliation and in Arthur's probably brought those cases together more saliently than would otherwise be true. The setting at the Chapele Saint Augustin would evoke English examples rather than Continental. I rather believe that with different degrees of vividness the author intended his audience to recollect all recent royal humiliations.

In discussing the background to Branch X of the *Perlesvaus*, kings and their failings will continue to occupy us.

#### IV

Scattered through the last branches of the *Perlesvaus*, mainly in Branch

X, is the story of Brien des Isles, his treason against Arthur, and his plottings against Lancelot. If it were not so fragmented, the account might be called the *Book of Brien*. For present purposes it is necessary to summarize it:

*Introduction.* Two short passages (6385-93, 7338-51) portray Brien des Isles as a powerful neighbor who has had "maint contens" with Arthur and now harbors his enemies and Lancelot's.

*Part I* (7636-7753). A. Brien wages successful warfare against Arthur's people in the area of Cardueil, while the King, Gawain, and Lancelot are absent.

B. Lancelot, on his return alone, achieves victories without ending the war.

*Part II* (7825-8155, 8252-80). A. After Arthur's return, Brien is captured in the local war.

B. Imprisoned for a time, he is at length released and installed as a court favorite. He begins to undermine Lancelot.

C. Madaglan, King of Oriande, invades Arbanie; its people appeal to Arthur for aid. Lancelot is sent to them, and he defeats Madaglan.

D. After Lancelot is called home, Madaglan invades again. Brien is unsuccessful against him.

E. Claudas, king of an unnamed realm, threatens.

*Part III* (8493-8661). A. Madaglan's activities have spread against Arthur so that he "conquerroit de ses illes e de sa terre grant partie" (8494). Lancelot catches him on an island, again defeats him, kills him, and conquers his kingdom of Oriande.

B. Lancelot refuses to become king of this far land unless directed to do so by Arthur.

C. Brien nevertheless persuades Arthur that Lancelot plans to accept the crown and then invade his suzerain's lands.

D. So Arthur recalls Lancelot, has him arrested in a *mêlée* at court, and imprisons him.

E. Claudas again threatens.

*Part IV* (9438-9536). A. Claudas successfully begins the invasion of Oriande and Arbanie.

B. Frightened thereby, and convinced by Lucan of Lancelot's innocence, Arthur releases his wronged knight.

C. Brien, declaring that he has been insulted, quits court and takes refuge with Claudas.

Brien, Claudas, and Arthur with his court appear no more in the *Perlesvaus*. The colophon to the Brussels manuscript promises a sequel on Arthur's wars against Claudas and Brien.

It is noteworthy that, except in the passages just summarized, neither court intrigues nor military campaigns are treated in the *Perlesvaus*.

Brien des Isles is delineated with such realism as to lead many, like Miss Weston outright and Nitze gropingly<sup>16</sup> to identify him with a single historical personage. Indeed his name may have come to the mind of the author of the *Perlesvaus* both because it already existed in Arthurian

literature and because there had been a Brian of Wallingford, sometimes denominated Brian de Insula, who was troublesome to royal authority in the days of King Stephen. For aught other than the suggestion of a name he seems too remote in time, too obscure, because in his day many were like him, and insufficiently parallel in career to serve as a model for Brien des Isles.

In Arthur's kingdom, Brien des Isles is treated as a nearly independent noble. The Plantagenets regarded Wales, at moments Scotland, and later Ireland as theirs. At times chiefs in these outlying lands were practically independent, at others no more varying in obedience than other nobles. The author of the *Perlesvaus* would naturally be a partisan of the Norman nobles in Britain; we have already seen evidence to that effect and there will be more. He would also support the ruling house, at least insofar as it was the instrument of Anglo-Norman domination of others. The nature of that support may be deduced from the summary just set down; discussion to follow should make it clearer. The author and his public were of course not blind to dissension in the midst of the Anglo-Normans. Antipathetic personages may engender emotions similar to those stirred by nobles objectionably participating in political intrigues at the Plantagenet courts.

The land of Arbanie plays an important part in Part II, C and D, of the summary above. Arbanie seems only a slight deformation of Albanie.<sup>17</sup> We may therefore assume that the author is speaking of Scotland. It was invaded by Madaglan, King of Oriande. Oriande suggests a country to the east,<sup>18</sup> and the *Perlesvaus* insists on distance by saying that Madaglan was obliged to cross two seas to reach Arbanie, giving the impression that he speaks of Scandinavia. Nitze (II, 234-35) discusses similarities between "Madeglans" and sundry names connected with Arthurian literature, but never suggests a resemblance greater than there is between the names Madaglan of Oriande and Macmanud of Orkney. As Earl of Orkney Harald Macmanud was a feudatory of the King of Norway. He was also Earl of Caithness in Scotland across the straits from Orkney. Until 1194 his interests were principally in Norway, but he had espoused the losing party in internecine struggles there, and in 1196 he turned his arms against Scotland. He was defeated by William the Lion, King of Scotland, and reduced to subservience. If Harald Macmanud of Orkney contained some suggestion to the author of the *Perlesvaus* for Madaglan of Oriande, then William the Lion played a rôle similar to that of Lancelot (in II, C above). At best the parallel is not complete, for Madaglan was killed in a second invasion, and Harald was a relative peaceful Earl of Caithness the rest of his life after defeat. It can scarcely be objected, however, that, while Lancelot was simply Arthur's knight, William was an independent king. He was in 1196, but for fifteen years, from 1174 to 1189 (or 1175 to 1190) he had been for all his holdings the obedient vassal of Henry II. In 1174 he was captured in battle by English forces at Alnwick and was released from prison only upon doing fealty on hard conditions made palatable as a contrast to something like a year spent in prison. He attended Henry's court, and obtained his permission

before campaigning against rebels in Scotland. He bought back his independence from Richard in 1190, was always friendly with the Lion Heart, but was often at outs with King John. For this career one may see in the *Perlesvaus*, a similarity not to Lancelot, but to Brien des Isles (capture in battle, imprisonment, service to the captor, and eventual separation). One gains the impression that the author of the *Perlesvaus* was not very well versed in Scottish history and was deliberately avoiding a consistent parallel. He put the distant expeditions in Arbanie, because it was indeed far away, and in Scottish history there were enough likenesses to what he wished to relate about far campaigns to awaken reminiscences in his readers. For Brien des Isles and for Lancelot he had additional models closer at hand.

In the area on the Welsh border the most eligible models for Brien des Isles were Iorwerth and Howel of Gwynllwg, father and son, at times lords of Caerleon. Iorwerth in 1158 began holding both province and town under protection of King Henry. In 1171 Henry deprived him of Caerleon. Shortly afterward the displaced father and his son raided the town without taking the castle. During Henry's troubles with his sons, Iorwerth and particularly Howel warred against the king, again seizing Caerleon Castle and laying waste the country to the east. In 1175 Henry regained the castle, but in a pacification of the summer of that year Howel was made its royal keeper and was on good terms with the English ruler thenceforward. He was still flourishing in 1184.<sup>19</sup> Unlike Brien des Isles, Howel of Gwynllwg was never a prisoner of his sovereign and did not quit him late in anger. He was, however, an enemy laying waste territory about Caerleon-Cardueil and afterward an instrument of royal rule, just as Brien ravaged the country about Cardueil-Caerleon and served the king later as a counselor.

A more powerful Welsh analogue for Brien is Rhys ap Griffith, conveniently called Lord Rhys, the Welsh noble dominant in South Wales in the last third of the twelfth century. Lord Rhys was at no time a prisoner of Henry II, but he was a prince with whom Henry became reconciled in 1172 after a period of hostilities. Unlike William the Lion and Howel of Gwynllwg he was unable to maintain amicable relations with Henry to the end, not so much because his own will changed as because his restless sons grew up and found peace with the Anglo-Normans little to their taste. He himself revolted against Richard and remained inimical until his death in 1197. Rhys, like Brien, completed the cycle from enmity through friendship back to hostility.

Henry II had in addition to Wales and Scotland another frontier area outside of France where important conquests occurred, that is, Ireland. The invasion of that island began because Dermot MacMurrough, who had precariously established himself as King of Leinster, was defeated by other Irish chiefs and came to plead for help at the court of Henry II. Henry authorized him to enlist aid from the barons of his realm. Thus the fugitive was successful in tempting the most important Anglo-Norman nobles of South Wales to join him. The first forces reached Ireland in 1169. Here is the analogue to the appeal for help which, in the *Perlesvaus*, the people of Arbanie made and to the dispatch of Lancelot to assist them (II, C).

The Norman chiefs in Ireland were the same nobles as opposed Lord Rhys, most notably Richard de Clare, Earl of Pembroke and Striguil, and the "race of Nest," that is, the sons and grandsons of the South Welsh princess, Nest, who, as said earlier, was prodigal of her favors to Normans, and also richly reproductive. In Ireland the enemies defeated by the Welsh Normans were primarily Celtic, but there were also the Ostmen, the Norse who had settled in Ireland to become entrepreneurs in its coastal cities, after invasions analogous to those made in Arbanie by the men of Oriande. They succumbed like the Irish before the Anglo-Norman earl and his allies. In fact Madaglan's final defeat by Lancelot (III, A) has a tactical resemblance to a Norman exploit involving both the Norse and the Irish. Lancelot first destroyed Madaglan's fleet, then caught its leader inland to destroy him. Similarly in 1171 the men from Wales first defeated the Ostmen's fleet when it attacked Dublin; then they beat the Irish on land.<sup>20</sup>

Brien des Isles, as a nefarious intriguer at court—for whom the Welsh and Scottish princes furnish no parallels—has his analogues in Ireland, not among the Irish or Ostmen, but in the administrators whom Henry sent to take over the Irish conquests for him, despoiling the victors of their freedom of sovereignty (compare II, D and III, C). De Lacy and FitzAldhelm served Henry's interests well. From the point of view of De Clare and the race of Nest they were highly objectionable; the truly felonious official was Hervey Mountmaurice, of whom more later.

Lancelot is evidently the personage in the *Perlesvaus* whose rôle corresponds to that of a border Norman. Just as Brien is in some sort the man about whom are clustered parallels to several of their enemies, so we may expect Lancelot to be the hero in whose exploits are presented reminiscences of men prominent in the conquest of Ireland. If we equate Lancelot principally with any one of them, it must be with Richard de Clare. The earl did not have the heroic proportions of Lancelot and did not become the king's prisoner, but in Ireland as in Wales he was accepted as the man with prestige among the Anglo-Normans. It was he who dealt with Henry II, bowing before royal wishes and fighting the king's battles—not with Lancelot's selfless devotion, but still as one conscious of royal rights. Both men after victorious campaigns had opportunities to become kings in the country of conquest and both forwent the offers made them. In the Earl's case, Dermot gave him his daughter in marriage, promising that she should be the heir to the kingdom of Leinster. When Dermot died in 1171, Henry II took measures to cut off supplies that were being sent from his kingdom to Ireland so as to discourage the Earl's ambitions. The latter quickly laid his conquests at his sovereign's feet. Lancelot's motives were different, but the act was the same (III, B). Both men also fought for their king when he was beset with enemies within his realm, Lancelot when he found Brien laying waste the country around Cardueil (I, B), Richard at Gisors in Normandy during the great rebellion of 1173.

Two members of the race of Nest, Robert FitzStephen, a son of Nest, and Raymond FitzGerald, one of her grandsons, had adventures or charac-

teristics similar to Lancelot's. Robert was at one time a prisoner of Henry II, then released, and accepted in the King's service. He was not made prisoner in a great hall with the king present as was Lancelot, but like Lancelot he came into royal duress through capture by those who were essentially the king's enemies (III, C). Robert, at the time of the invaders' desperate sally from Dublin that resulted in great victory, was besieged separately with a small band at Carrick. Because two bishops presented to him false testimony that Dublin had fallen to the Irish, he surrendered and was held until Henry II came in 1171 to claim the fruits of conquest. The prisoner was then, as part of the general submission of the Irish, turned over to Henry, who did not liberate him for some time, asserting that he had invaded Ireland without royal consent. Before too long, however, he was released and granted important lands.

Raymond FitzGerald, le Gros, never became a prisoner of Henry II, but he would have been in 1176, had he not been essential as the leader in the suppression of an Irish rebellion at the moment when royal agents came to arrest him (compare III, C and IV, B). He was necessary because of his popularity with his troops, who, on this occasion as on others too, refused to fight unless he was their commander. According to Giraldus Cambrensis (who was himself a grandson of Nest), Hervey Mountmaurice played the role of Brien des Isles in bringing about his arrest. Giraldus describes Hervey as a handsome man, at one time valiant in war, "sed hodie plus habens malitiae quam militiae" (*Expugnatio*, 328), and further:

vir invidus, delator, et duplex; vir subdolus, facetus, et fallax; cujus sub lingua mel et lac veneno confecta (328).

To destroy Raymond, Hervey

solita mentis malitia affinitatis gratis non mutata, continuo nunciis ad Anglorum regem transmissis, illi sinistre rerum eventum indicavit; asseverans quoque Reimandum, contra regis honorem et fidem debitam, non tantum Limericum verum etiam Hiberniam totam sibi suisque jam occupare proculdubio proposuisse (327).

Raymond, after suppressing the rebellion, yielded up his castles to the new justiciar, William FitzAldhelm, who then deprived him of lordship over them (compare III, B). Giraldus describes FitzAldhelm in terms only slightly milder than those used to characterize Hervey. The likeness of Raymond to Lancelot lies both in being the victim of machinations at the royal court and in serving as a field general loved by his men.

In the foregoing discussion the likeness between the behavior of Henry II and Arthur has been implicit. Furthermore, Arthur's long absence from his British capital during his Grail pilgrimage may be compared to Henry's absences during his stays in France. In only one case need the incidents of the Grail pilgrimage concern us. As Gawain and his uncle return from the Grail Castle to face Brien at Cardueil, the last of their adventures seems a reflection of an episode in Ireland. Arthur and Gawain with five knights "du païs qui sont a lor acort" (7762) are shut up in a castle by "grant foison de

chevaliers" (7761) under the leadership of Anurez the Bastard, who seeks vengeance for the death of a brother. The besieged make a sally, lay many of the enemy low, but are hard-pressed till Meliot de Logres comes up with fifteen knights to turn the tide of battle. "Li rois li done le chastel, si volt q'il le tiege de lui" (7794). Similarly, at Dublin after a long siege by 30,000 Irish in the summer of 1171, the Anglo-Norman invaders decided on a desperate sally (referred to above also in the paragraphs on Ostmen and on Robert FitzStephen). They divided into three units, says Giraldus (*Expugnatio*, 268). Raymond led one with twenty knights, Miles de Cogan the middle one with thirty knights, and the Earl with forty the last. As Giraldus tells the story, Raymond with the smallest band attacked first (other accounts emphasize Miles). They caught the camp of Roderick O'Connor by surprise; the Irish effort to form their resistance was becoming effectual when the other attacking units arrived. The Irish were then routed, and the invaders were able to keep Dublin permanently. In both accounts we see a small band sallying under seemingly hopeless conditions and, with the aid of a later arriving detachment, though still greatly outnumbered, completely defeating the besieging force, so that the fortress relieved becomes permanently part of the British king's domains. Though in the romance Arthur participates in the battle, while Henry was far away, the latter did come to Dublin before the year was out.

King Arthur plays no admirable part in the episodes concerning Brien, nor, in the eyes of the Anglo-Norman barons, did Henry in Ireland. In both cases, however, there is continual recognition of royal authority. Henry was puissant not merely because he was king; he owed much of his power to his personality and to the administrative machine that he had set up. The Arthur of the last part of the *Perlesvaus* is totally lacking in skill as a ruler. In order for events to befall him like those in Henry's reign, the author assigns to Brien success in making the sovereign adopt counsels that bring about phenomena similar, though not identical, to those that Henry achieved by skill in divisive techniques.

In this part of the romance, the author of the *Perlesvaus* could not totally neglect allusions to events in France. The shadow of King Claudas, who must stand for the Capetians, hangs over the fate of Britain. He has at the end begun to reduce the empire of Arthur; he follows the enduring policy of Philip Augustus. The colophon of the Brussels manuscript, by promising a sequel treating of the wars with Claudas, seems to proclaim that the struggle which drove the English kings from France offered a good subject. The text of the romance, by leaving Brien a refugee with a warring Claudas, has a similar implication.

The historic parallels that we have so far been considering seem to be concentrated in the period 1170-1180. The *Perlesvaus* must have been written at least a decade and a half after that date, probably during the reign of King John (1199-1216). Did the author neglect in his last branches allusions to events more nearly of the time in which he was writing? I believe not. When Arthur was on his Grail pilgrimage, the distress in his kingdom

caused not only by his absence but also by the uncertainty of his fate—it was rumored that he was dead (7352, 7677, 7694)—recalls vividly the state of England during Richard's Crusade, particularly at its end when he was shipwrecked and imprisoned and John was plotting. Henry II was merely absent; there was no mystery as to his whereabouts nor possible death. The Arthur of the romance is more like John than Henry; like the latter he accepts advice from prejudiced sources and relies on court favorites. Brien resembles Meiler FitzHenry, another grandson of Nest, but one who enjoyed the favor of John and became his justiciar in Ireland. The events that befall Lancelot are not without analogies to William Marshal's efforts to hold his own against this man in Ireland, different in that William's allies triumphed in his absence while Lancelot's friends in Arbanie were not able to hold their own; both groups were, however, staunch supporters of their leader. Marshal suffered from John; though without being himself imprisoned, he had to furnish hostages, first his sons, then faithful retainers. His disgrace was comparable to Lancelot's. He, like Lancelot, recovered the monarch's esteem when, forgetting injuries done him, he championed the royal cause. Marshal did not save John, though he might have done so if John had not died; Lancelot did not save Arthur—the romance ends too soon. Marshal offered to do battle when John accused him before the king's court in Dublin, though there was no actual *mêlée* as when Lancelot was seized in the presence of Arthur. Finally, Lancelot is of a character much more like the Earl of Pembroke of John's time than like Marshal's father-in-law and predecessor, Richard de Clare. William Marshal is everywhere celebrated for fidelity to his kings under the worst trials. We might, therefore, see in the depiction of Lancelot a cautious homage to a patron who, while indicating a desire for personal anonymity, had given directions that something like the days of conquest of his predecessors should be incorporated in the romance to which he was giving benevolent encouragement.<sup>21</sup>

Certainly the wars against Madaglan and the court intrigues connected with them seem to reflect primarily events earlier than the days of King John. For instance, Henry II is by most historians attributed suspicions of Richard de Clare like those that Arthur had of Lancelot, while John had to confront an actual claimant to his throne, Louis of France, husband to a granddaughter of Henry II. Again, like the Arthur of the *Perlesvaus*, Henry II extended his empire—in Ireland and in Scotland—, while John gained nothing and lost half of France.

In the *Perlesvaus* the author does not seem to allude to wars in which he had been a participant; his accounts are too summary. On the other hand, he gives the impression of having witnessed intrigues, perhaps on no higher plane than politics in a monastery, but more probably in the court of some great lord, if not that of a king. The discussions at Arthur's court seem written by a man of experience in such debate.

The significance of probing for geographic identifications and for reminiscences of history in the *Perlesvaus* lies in the aid given to determining the overtones to the declared religious intention of the romance. The code of



mores fits the conditions at the end of the twelfth century in South Wales better than those elsewhere. The historical reminiscences accentuate the lessons on ethical conduct proper in that period. Both bring out the fact that the author is a methodical and not a floundering workman.<sup>22</sup>

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## NOTES

1. Numerals in parentheses with no other accompanying symbols refer to line numbers in Nitze and Jenkins, *Le haut Livre du Graal, Perlesvaus*, Volume I, Chicago, 1932. References to Volume II, published 1937, begin with the Roman numeral II, followed by a page number.

2. J. Neale Carman, "The *Perlesvaus* and Bristol Channel," *Research Studies* (Washington State University, Pullman), XXXII (1964), 85-94.

3. *Research Studies*, XXXII, 90.

4. Throughout this study statements on distances and land and sea configurations are in conformity with the evidence of Ordnance Survey maps, often coupled with personal observation.

5. This quotation and the next are from papers published by Clark in *Archeologica Cambrensis*, this one from "Outline of the Topography of Glamorgan," I (1870), 9; the next from "Piracy under Penarth," III (1872), 48.

6. Vyvyan Rees, *Southwest Wales* (London, 1963), 43.

7. When Henry II visited St. David's, he rode out from Pembroke in the morning and returned there to pass the night.

8. *Arch. Cambr.*, I (1870), 5.

9. In the passage on Gawain there are two references to Welsh leagues. The Damsel of the Cart had gone out from Pennevoiseuse seven Welsh leagues when she met Gawain. From the description of the country we may assume that she was 12 or 14 miles out of Penarth, whereby it appears that for the author of the *Perlesvaus* a Welsh league was two miles or a little less. Therefore, when Gawain left Clamador to ride twenty leagues to find shelter he had 35 to 40 miles to cover. It was about two o'clock, for the two men had met at mid-day and parted near "nonne." In midsummer Gawain could travel by daylight until about nine o'clock; a ride of such a length in such a time would be possible, but the author may well say that the knight had "grant jornee fete," especially as he had already ridden half a day. His horse would be completely jaded, but he gave it a rest at Camaalot.

The author's concept of the length of a Welsh league is also indicated when Gawain inquires of a hermit how far it is from his hermitage to the sea (4201). He is told that the water is not more than two Welsh leagues away; the hermit goes there often in pursuit of daily tasks. It cannot indeed be far away, but neither can it be within sight as there would have then been no subject of inquiry. Three or four miles seems a proper distance.

10. Daniel Defoe, *A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (London, 1927), 452.

11. Giraldus Cambrensis, *Opera*, eds. J. S. Brewer et al., Rolls Series, No. 21 (London, 1861-91), VI, 32.

12. It was not usual in the time of our romance for a man to receive a territorial surname based upon the origins of his mother. In the example offered by Meliot, the desire of the author to make Meliot despite his evil father part of the forces of good partially explains the choice. In case, however, that a son was the product of a marriage between a rich heiress and a man of few holdings, both the husband and the progeny might take the name of the heiress's holdings, as in the cases of William Marshall and William Longsword. There are three flaws in using this exceptional practice as an explanation of Meliot's surname: first, the husband is not accorded the epithet; second, the maternal holdings do not include all Logres; and third, there is no indication that Meliot's mother had inherited the holdings, to which one may answer that nothing says the contrary. The first objection may be discarded because the author of the *Perlesvaus* would not wish to accord Marin, an antipathetic character, the same surname as his son, and might rightly call him by his original name; in William Marshal's case Marshal continued to be his name, though he was often spoken of as the Earl of Pembroke or Striguil,

similarly with Longsword and Salisbury, though in his case Longsword became seldom used. An answer to the second objection might be based on the case of Marie de France, if indeed she was the illegitimate daughter of Geoffrey of Anjou and half-sister of Henry II of England. However debatable the question of Marie's origin may be, it seems likely that the English were glad to accept the surname because she came from France; in the same way the author of the *Perlesvaus* might assume that her noble origins outside of Wales would cling as a surname to Marin's wife and son.

Meliot is a vassal of Gawain by homage described at Meliot's first appearance (1598-1603). At that moment "[Meliot] li enfes senefie li Sauverres du Monde" (2230), and the homage is based on the relations of Jesus and John the Baptist (of whom Gawain is in his Grail quest the figure). Leaving aside the symbolism, the child had as yet inherited nothing from his father, and he does homage therefore either for the hypothetical inheritance from his mother or for lands that, again hypothetically, Gawain will grant him. Either supposition requires the lands to be outside Wales.

By "le roiaume de Logres" in line 4921 England is probably meant, but the circumstances deserve comment more extensive than Nitze's (II, 298). The mention is bound up with the episode of the giant Logrin, of whom Arthur says "damajoit ma terre plus que nului" (4010). Perlesvaus hears a report on the giant from a hermit after passing over "un pais qui li senbloit estre gastez, car il estoit tot voit de gent; il n'i voit que bestes sauvages qui corioient parmi les champagnes. Il rentra del gaste pais en une forest" (4906-08), where he found the hermit installed "el regord d'une montaigne." The hermit says: "Ceste terre gasteie en son ceste forest par ont vos venistes est li commencement dou roiaume de Logres. Il i soloit avoir .i. jaiaint qui si estoit granz et cruex et orribles que nus n'osoit abiter en demi le roiaume" (4920-23). He later speaks of "ceste forest de Logres" (4931). The phrase that speaks of Logrin rendering uninhabitable half the kingdom would be more appropriate for a country of smaller dimensions than England, especially since Perlesvaus had passed through the uninhabited district without stopping, that is, in less than a day's ride. What seems designated here is rather part than all of England. Certainly it is frontier country—"li commencement dou roiaume de Logres," therefore, land subject to border raids. It may be that Logrin is reminiscent of some Welsh leader.

13. *Research Studies*, XXXII, 103-04. In this passage I said that in the *Perlesvaus* Cardueil could not be Carlisle, as in other romances and in the *Close Rolls*, A. D. 1226, p. 100, column a. I offered as proof the statements (7985, 8011) that Arbanie was distant. I should have added that Arthur had only to ride a day and two or three hours from Cardueil to reach the Chapele Saint Augustin in Wales (203-265); he might have been in Wales throughout his ride.

14. On the geographical aspect, see Nitze's summary of opinions under "Blanche Forest," II, 206-08; on the relation to John of Glastonbury's story, II, 105-20; on the historical reminiscences the following: Helen Adolf, "Studies in the *Perlesvaus*: the Historical Background," *Studies in Philology*, XLII (1945), 723-40; Pierre Gallais, "Le *Perlesvaus* et l'interdit de 1171," *Mélanges Crozet* (Poitiers, 1966), 887-901.

15. Roger Howden, *Chronica*, ed. Wm Stubbs, Rolls Series, No. 51 (London, 1868-71), III, 288-89.

16. Weston, Jessie L., "Who was Brien des Illes?," *Modern Philology*, XXII (1924-5), 405-11; Nitze, II, 100.

17. The form "Arbanie," never "Albanie," occurs in all three manuscripts of the *Perlesvaus* containing the episodes on Brien des Isles. "Albanie" occurs twice in earlier parts of the romance, once in line 51 as the land of Perlesvaus's uncle Meliarmans, who never appears in the work, and once (2072) named as the land of King Gurgaran at the moment that he is baptized Archier. Gurgaran was the possessor of the sword with which John the Baptist was beheaded, and therefore Gawain's adventure in his land presents religiously symbolic features as well as a folklorish tale with no historical background, close akin to that in *HRB*, X, 3, concerning the giant on Mont St. Michel. The author must have had made the alteration from "Albanie" to "Arbanie" to differentiate Gurgaran's land from the realm in which Lancelot made his conquests. He suggested Scotland thereby, but may have chosen to insert -r- rather than simply eliminate -l- because, as shown later, there were also reminiscences of events in Ireland.

18. See II, 133. The communication from Brugger there quoted expresses the belief that perhaps Arthur's conquest of Norway as told by Geoffrey (IX, II) was the source for the *Perlesvaus* in the matter of these wars. Nitze suggests that a later Galfridian conqueror of

Norway, Malgo (XI, 7) gave rise to the name Madaglan. Both these identifications seem possible, but Brugger's would only give the author of the *Perlesvaus* a point of departure, for the incidents in *HRB* are small in number and different from those in the *Perlesvaus*. If the author had wished Malgo to be suggested by Madaglan, he would have had to make the character change sides in hostilities.

19. In *Research Studies*, XXXII, 104, I reported erroneously that Howel died in 1174. The data for the correction and on Welsh history throughout this article are drawn from: Lloyd, John Edward, *A History of Wales*, Vol. II (London, 1948, reproduction of the edition of 1912). 1912).

20. Giraldus Cambrensis, V, "Expugnatio Hibernica," 264 and 268.

21. I have hinted that William Marshal was perhaps the patron of the *Perlesvaus*. This notion enters into my hypothesis on the origin of the pseudo-Map Cycle, developed in a book-length study which is now under editorial consideration. The hypothesis attributes to Eleanor of Aquitaine during her retirement at Fontevrault, 1194-1204, the initiation of a plan for a cycle of romances on Lancelot and the Grail. The evidence demonstrates that in the pseudo-Map Cycle personages definitely recalling William Marshal appear, namely, Banin and Pharien in the earliest pages of the Prose *Lancelot*, and Lancelot after he renounces Guenevere in the *Mort Artu*. Banin and Pharien—so runs the hypothesis—were developed in composition soon after the early plan was formed, that is, while William Marshal was able and probably willing to help out with the project. At this early stage various sections of the Cycle were assigned to various individuals, the Grail sections to Robert de Boron and an unknown. The output, including the *Perlesvaus* as the product of the unknown writer, was completed before the Cyclic Project, which had fallen into abeyance, was revived and reorganized with a plan which rejected the Grail contributions already written, though keeping Robert's *Merlin*. The *Perlesvaus* then follows the specifications, which were not numerous, contained in the early outline. They required achievement of the Grail and treatment of the sinfulness of the love of Lancelot.

The *Perlesvaus*, unlike the pseudo-Map Cycle, reveals no connection with Fontevrault and the Fontevrists, not even with the houses of that order established in England. William Marshal seems a possible intermediary between the Fontevrists who continued to nurture the Cyclic Project and the author of the *Perlesvaus*. He could have been commissioned by Eleanor to find a Grail writer; he was much in France between 1194 and 1204 and could have visited Eleanor in her retirement (she protected him at one moment in his youth). Or the Fontevrists could have enlisted Marshal at Amesbury through contacts established by William Longsword, the seat of whose earldom at Salisbury is next to Amesbury, for Longsword and Marshal were good friends with a family bond between them through marriage. If Marshal, the Earl of Pembroke, undertook to find the Grail author, it would not be strange that he selected a man connected in some way with his Welsh holdings. This man acknowledges the nature of his patronage by his allusions to the de Clare family, which was that of Marshal's wife, and to the great earl himself.

The evidence supporting this hypothesis is more extensive and impressive within the pseudo-Map Cycle than in the *Perlesvaus*. The Cycle contains at several points ripostes to or adaptations of ideas and motifs in the *Perlesvaus*. In the treatment of Marshal as a model they are in harmony.

22. M. Gallais (*Mélanges Crozet*, 887-89) presents arguments for his belief that the *Perlesvaus* was written by two men. I had a similar impression thirty-five years ago, but after I studied the symbolism (*PMLA*, LXI [1946] 42-83), I concluded that one person wrote the whole because an intricate system of symbolism is followed throughout. I still doubt that a team or successive authors could be so consistent as regards religious philosophy, methods of describing fights, character of humor, and choice of words. It is possible that the author completed his work with a gap in time between his early and late composition.

# **“Li chastiaus . . . Qu’Amors prist puis par ses esforz”: The Conclusion of Guillaume de Lorris’ *Rose***

DOUGLAS KELLY

This paper is not an attempt to reconstruct the missing part of Guillaume de Lorris’ poem, nor to derive from speculation as to what he might have written unfounded generalizations regarding his intention and the instruction set forth in the extant *Roman de la Rose*, part one. Nonetheless, Guillaume’s allusion to the missing part of his poem—“li chastiaus . . . Qu’Amors prist puis par ses esforz” (vss. 3503-04)<sup>1</sup>—is precise and clear enough to allow one to view the poem as a whole in the light of the surviving fragment. These lines are taken from a brief plot summary. And Guillaume’s scattered plot summaries<sup>2</sup> do correspond in every instance to what he then wrote. Only the specific event described in vss. 3503-04 falls outside the extant narrative. Moreover, his words in that passage make it possible to recognize a striking difference in Jean de Meun’s continuation, and elucidate thereby precisely how the two poets differ in intention and instruction. The latter point is crucial. Some recent scholars have argued that in continuing the *Roman de la Rose* Jean actually carried out Guillaume’s plan, that he elaborated and completed the poem essentially in the same spirit as Guillaume began it.<sup>3</sup> And their reasoning often appears convincing enough. But we must be careful! Jean certainly did not wish to betray any blatant contradictions between his part of the poem and Guillaume’s. Therefore the transition required deft handling. And that is precisely what a close study reveals. In fact, as we shall see, the differences are effaced by the way Jean gradually broadens the perspective on what actions and subjects are appropriate to love: quite contrary to Guillaume, who strives to narrow the context in which one may truly speak of love.

Guillaume describes his part of the *Rose* as a complete “Art d’Amors (vs. 38). Now, the only instruction formally set forth as such in his poem is that delivered by the god of love to the poet, after the latter has been struck down by the arrows of love. Guillaume stresses the significance of that instruction.

Li deus d’Amors lors m’encharja,  
Tot ensi con vos orroiz ja,  
Mot a mot ses comandemenz:  
Bien les devise cist romanz.  
Qui amer viaut or i entende,  
Que li romanz des or amende.  
(vss. 2057-62)

For Guillaume this instruction is essential to the elaboration of his narrative. In fact, we shall see that it is the foundation for what precedes and follows,

thus determining to a remarkable degree the poem's disposition; and it adds to our knowledge of how Guillaume intended to conclude the poem.

The instruction given by the god of love is divided into three parts. It deals, respectively, with the lover as gentleman (vss. 2077-2232), the "adventures" of the lover (vss. 2233-2580), and finally the lover's hope and consolations (vss. 2581-2764). Each part is conveniently set off from the following part. For part one, Guillaume summarizes his instruction.

Or te vueil briement recorder  
Ce que t'ai dit, por remembrer,  
Car la parole moins engrieue  
A retenir quant ele est brieve:  
Qui d'Amors viaut faire son maistre  
Cortois e senz orgueil doit estre;  
Cointes se teigne e envoisiez,  
E de largece soit proisiez.  
(vss. 2225-32)

To be *cortois*, one must avoid *vilanie*, and, especially, backbiting (*mesdire*, vs. 2089). He who is *senz orgueil* shows his character by the way he conducts himself with others, in public, socially, and especially with ladies (vss. 2099-2132). *Cointes*—"elegant"—implies propriety and taste in clothing and personal appearance, in order to please those whom the lover comes into contact with; it also includes cleanliness (vss. 2133-74). Fourth, to be *envoisiez* is to be polite and entertaining company (vss. 2175-2210). The final requisite, *largece*, is self-explanatory (vss. 2211-24).

The joy the lover should help maintain in courtly society gives way in part two of the god's instruction to grief when he is left to himself. When alone, he vacillates between the effort to communicate with his lady and the inevitable deception that follows his efforts.

Or t'ai dit coment n'en quel guise  
Amanz doit faire mon servise:  
Or le fai donques, se tu viaus  
De la bele avoir tes aviaus.  
(vss. 2577-80)

This section describes what are termed the "adventures" of the lover. There are four examples given here. In order: he attempts unsuccessfully to see his lady (vss. 2318-24); he succeeds in seeing her, but is mute in her presence (vss. 2332-60); he sees his lady and speaks to her, but does not say all he wishes nor express himself as eloquently as he would (vss. 2391-2420); and, finally, he is able to express his love to her, but does not see her while doing so (vss. 2513-42). Each of these scenes is circumscribed by extensive lamentations: the lover, in despair at his total or relative lack of success, abandons himself in solitude to despondency, giving free rein to his thoughts in extensive monologues. Much of the illustrative material is drawn from Ovid, but an Ovid shorn of irony and deceit. The adventures, where the lover

alternates between action and inaction, high hopes and despair, conclude with a description of the lover's increasing loss of weight, as well as his efforts to ingratiate himself with the lady's servants and acquaintances, and to remain always as near to her as possible (vss. 2543-76).

The lover in despair discovers his consolations in part three.

Or t'ai, ce m'est vis, déclaré  
 Ce don je te vi esgaré,  
 Car je t'ai conté, senz mentir,  
 Les biens qui pueent garantir  
 Les amanz e garder de mort;  
 Or sez qui te fera confort,  
 Qu'au moins avras tu Esperance,  
 S'avras Douz Penser, senz doutance,  
 E Douz Parler e Douz Regart.  
 Chascuns de ceus vueil qu'il te gart  
 Jusque tu puisses miauz atendre,  
 Qu'autres biens, qui ne sont pas mendre,  
 Mais graignor, avras ça avant;  
 Mais je te doing a ja itant.  
 (vss. 2751-64)

The four comforts complement and complete the preceding two parts of the god's instruction. *Esperance* gives the lover the fortitude and the desire to support the suffering endured during the adventures. *Douz Penser* brings back to mind the beauty of his lady, and especially any favorable signs he may have received from her in the past—*un ris, un bel semblant, une bele chiere*—and thus ministers the substance of hope for future happiness. *Douz Parler*, related to courtesy, refers to conversations about the lady, especially with a trustworthy friend in whom the lover can confide. *Douz Regart*, finally, is the lady's glance, at once favorable, pleasing, and promising.

And that is the sum of the god's instruction. It seems conventional enough, perhaps even drab. Yet, with it, Guillaume asserts that the *Roman de la Rose* begins to improve. By these words, however, he means more than just the instruction; as will become apparent, he is also referring to the rest of the narrative, that part describing the allegorized adventures of Guillaume in love.

Des or le fait bon escouter,  
 S'il est qui le sache conter,  
 Car la fin dou songe est mout bele  
 E la matire en est novele;  
 Qui dou songe la fin orra,  
 Je vos di bien que il porra  
 Des jeux d'Amors assez aprendre,  
 Par quoi il vueille tant atendre  
 Que j'espoigne e que j'enromance  
 Dou songe la senefiance.  
 (vss. 2063-72)

Indeed, the succeeding narrative, up to the point Guillaume stopped, is a pendant and illustration of the instruction given by the god of love, a transposition into allegorical narrative of material that is at once didactic and exemplary. The lover's effort to draw near to the rose, to pluck it, to kiss it, continues the adventures, where, as we have seen, the lover also attempts to draw near to his lady, to speak to and even kiss her. And in both the god's instruction and the allegorical narrative, at the moment of greatest apparent despair, hope appears. In the narrative, for example, this occurs just before the abrupt termination, when Jalosie has walled up the rose and Bel Acueil in the castle. The distressing thought that Fortune's wheel has flung the lover into the mud again opens momentarily to a ray of hope with Guillaume's *douz penser* that Bel Acueil will surely not forget him (vss. 4003-24). It is only a glimmer of hope, however, since the lover falls back into despair again almost immediately. Yet the final lines Guillaume wrote suggest that the lover may again be gravitating towards hope.<sup>4</sup>

Broadly speaking, that part of the *Roman de la Rose* preceding the god's instruction, reflects that instruction as well, namely part one on courtesy. Just as the god of love passes from *vilanie* to *cortoisie*, *mesdire* to *envoieure*, from *orgueil* to *cointerie*, so the lover moves from the world outside the garden of delight into that garden, led there by Oiseuse and invited into the company and dance of courtesy by *Cortoisie* herself. Indeed, if one does not look for precise, word for word correlations, the figures in the garden parallel closely their opposites portrayed on the wall outside. For Love, there is its opposite Hate; for Oiseuse and Richesse, there is *Pauvreté*; for *Largesse* on one side, *Avarice* and *Convoitise* on the other; *Cortoisie* contrasts with *Vilanie* and *Felonie*; *Franchise* with *Papelardie*, that is, hypocrisy; *Dedit* and *Liesse* with *Tristesse*; Beauty with *Envie*; and *Jeunesse* with *Vieillesse*. All the qualities that an aristocratic lover should possess, and the defects that he should avoid.

So, in fact, the god of love's instruction sets the pattern for the whole poem. Indeed, it may constitute the structural core for the work as Guillaume conceived it, with two symmetrical sections describing, first, the initiation of the poet into courtesy, delight, and finally love, and second, the adventures leading to and culminating in the capture of Jalosie's castle by love. The instruction itself takes up approximately 700 lines (vss. 2057-2765). Preceding are about 2000 lines, plus about 40 odd lines of prologue (vss. 1-44). If the plan is symmetrical, about 2000 lines were to follow, with perhaps an epilogue of about 40-50 lines.<sup>5</sup> Thus the poem would have extended to about 4800 or 4850 lines. Of this there are 4058 in Langlois' edition of Guillaume. What the some 800 lines remaining were to contain we may infer in part from Guillaume's own words, including those we have cited on the capture of the castle, and those on the rewards (*biens*) promised by love to his faithful follower (vss. 2026-37, 2760-63), in the "fin dou songe . . . mont bele" (vs. 2065). It is evident that with the conclusion of the poem, its meaning was to be clear (vss. 28-30, 2067-76). This may mean it will lie complete before us and that we shall therefore be able to understand it, or

again it may refer to the epilogue postulated above, where Guillaume would have elaborated upon the meaning of the poem. The concluding narrative, as Guillaume envisaged it, is resumed in the key passage concluding with the words cited in the title of this paper: "Des ore est droiz que je vos conte Coment je fui mellez a Honte", related in vss. 3511-3668; "Par cui je fui puis mout grevez", in vss. 3669-3796; "E coment li murs fu levez E li chastiaus riches e forz", in lines 3797 to the end. Then comes vs. 3504: "Qu'Amors prist puis par ses esforz." This final episode, as we have seen, is missing. Except for the last line, however, all that Guillaume sets forth is contained in the narrative before it breaks off. It is then reasonable to suppose that the one remaining episode, the seizure of the castle by the god of love, was supposed to follow and terminate the poem.

That it is love who takes the castle is significant. Not Venus, nor the lover on his own, can win the rose; only love does so. What is love? A moot question, but one to which Guillaume has his answer. Let us see what he says about it, by starting at the fountain of Narcissus near which Guillaume is first struck down by the arrows of love; that is, by the arrows of beauty, simplicity, courtesy or franchise, company, and beau semblant.

The example of Narcissus, Guillaume cautions, should serve as a warning to ladies not to scorn the service of worthy suitors, lest ladies suffer Narcissus' fate—the fate of the haughty and scornful. Guillaume is perfectly clear on this matter.

Dames, cest essemple aprenez;  
 Qui vers voz amis mesprenez;  
 Car, se vos les laissez morir,  
 Deus le vos savra bien merir.  
 (vss. 1507-10)

For himself, Guillaume asserts that *he* has no such fate to fear by looking into the fountain, since he is no Narcissus (vss. 1515-22). This is true: the danger for him stems not from previous insensitivity to love, but rather from what may happen while looking into the fountain, and afterwards. Guillaume's fate and fortune are in the hands of the god of love, and in love's hands are the five arrows.

Looking into the fountain, even before Love draws his bow and lets fly the first arrow, does have an immediate effect. In it the lover sees roses—in the plural only! (vss. 1616, 1622, 1625, 1627, 1637-54). But the roses he sees do not cause him to fall in love, but rather into what he calls a *noveau rage* (vs. 1583). *Rage* has two common meanings in the 13th century, according to von Wartburg's etymological dictionary. The one is virtually synonymous with the modern French and English word. The other is "agitation, folie": restlessness, folly. It is the latter meaning that is appropriate here. Guillaume's new rage, as it were, is pure desire—*d'amer volenté pure* (vs. 1586)—without a specific and single object; he just wants "love", from anyone and everyone that strikes his fancy. For Guillaume, this is not "real" love. For, possessed by desire, by "rage", the lover springs up



from the fountain and sets out for the rose bushes (vss. 1623-25): he desires to pluck "at least"—*Au moins* are his very words—at least one of them (vss. 1631-32), and he quickly singles out one especially pretty bud in order to pluck it *first*.

Why stress the plurality of roses desired by the raging lover? Because, in the next moment, a great change is to take place in the quality of Guillaume's sentiment. The god of love transfixes him with the first arrow, his desire is fixed permanently on the one bud, *rage* becomes *amour*. It is therefore most emphatically not a specific lady or a specific rose, nor is it love itself that Guillaume finds while gazing into the fountain; rather the fountain makes him aware of feminine beauty, and awakens in him a desire to possess that beauty. This is important, and we may therefore pause for a moment to insist on the interpretation. It is evident that the fountain and the crystals in it, in which Guillaume first perceives the rose bushes, cannot represent the eyes of the lady he is going to fall in love with, as has often been suggested. How can one conceive of the conventional eyes of *the* lady, which traditionally inspire love, becoming the source of an indiscriminate desire to pluck roses right and left? Thus far we can go along with Professor Fleming when he argues that the fountain of Narcissus is the mirror of desire, formidable and fatal to the innocent who peer into it.<sup>6</sup> For it harbors the crystals, the source of *novele rage*, the desire to pluck roses, the very roses reflected in such abundance in the crystals of the fountains.

Fortunately for courtesy, Guillaume's desires are reined in, directed, and concentrated upon one object to the exclusion of all others. This comes about through the god of love's arrows. The lover's exclusive desire will henceforth be his fear and consolation, as the god of love says it will be. The god first demands of his victim that he surrender and become his prisoner, and Guillaume willingly and voluntarily submits (vss. 1899-1925). Such free, or "frank", submission, such *franchise* (vs. 1939) on his part, moves the god of love to esteem him more highly. Indeed, so highly that Love changes the terms of submission to match the willingness of the new lover to serve him: the serf becomes the servant, a vassal in the service of his lord. Such love is neither tyrannical nor debasing. It is rather noble and courtly. Guillaume's willing submission to the god of love's dominion is a noble, feudal—*franc*—engagement, and his love, no longer *rage*, has now become *fin' amour* or *courtly* love. Love assures himself of Guillaume's fidelity by the precious device of locking his heart. Thereupon Love delivers the instruction that we have already discussed.

There is here an obvious attempt to differentiate among various kinds of love, a differentiation that recalls in both substance and form the categories discernible in Andreas Capellanus' treatise on love.<sup>7</sup> Corresponding to the poet's *rage* in the *Rose* are two forms of amorous sentiment in Andreas: the attraction to peasant girls, typical of the Old French *pastourelle*; and excessive desire—*nimia voluptatis abundantia*—for members of the opposite sex. Those who love, so to speak, in this way show little concern, in Andreas and Guillaume, for fidelity. Therefore, neither kind of desire constitutes real

love for these authors. Another type of love, superior to those we have just mentioned, Andreas calls the love of the *simplex amans*. This lover, attracted only by the physical charms of his lady, does indeed concentrate his affection on her, at least for a longer period of time; but the affection is simpler in nature, being only the desire to possess the lady's beauty, without serious regard for other qualities she may or may not possess. A more subdued form of *rage* perhaps, but love as well because the lover is faithful. Superior to this kind of lover stands Andreas' *sapiens amans*, *sapiens* here being closer in meaning to "prudent" than to "wise". This aristocratic or "courtly" lover loves faithfully and reasonably. His love derives from a proper appreciation of the lady's virtues, in the general sense of that word, rather than from purely physical attraction to her beauty. It is to this love that Guillaume's lover aspires when he willingly becomes love's vassal.

Unfortunately, Guillaume lacks *savoir faire*. He must learn to conduct himself in harmony with the love he professes. This means he must, through experience and the lessons of experience, come to appreciate the true quality of his sentiments, and learn what he may anticipate in the way of rewards from his lady. The "learning process" serves as an exemplary representation, through allegorical personification, of the attainment of ideal love, and takes up the rest of the extant narrative.<sup>8</sup> As we have seen, that narrative contains a number of adventures, similar in form to those described by the god of love in part two of his instruction. In the narrative as in the instruction, each adventure concludes with the forced separation of the lover from his rose.

The lover's first attempt to obtain the rose springs from the simple desire to possess it. He is forthright to the point of being crude. In other words, he is an inelegant *simplex amans*. Courteously received by Bel Acueil, he obtains a gift: one leaf from the rose. Encouraged by this token, and oblivious of Dangier, Male Bouche, Honte, and Peur, the rose's guardians, he impetuously asks for the rose itself. Bel Acueil is outraged: he would be *assoté* (vs. 2911) if he granted such a request, to make such a request is *vilains* (vs. 2915), that is, neither noble nor courteous. Bel Acueil gives way to Dangier, who heaps further reproach upon the only half-comprehending lover. To grant the rose, Dangier exclaims, would be *avilement* (vs. 2929); Guillaume is a *felon* (vs. 2932) who seeks only "*honte e contraire*" (vs. 2934).

Bel Acueil mal vos conossoit  
 Qui de vos servir s'angoissoit;  
 Si le beez a conchier.  
 (vss. 2937-39)

The outrage of Bel Acueil and Dangier is essentially the same phenomenon. And its effect is to brand Guillaume's disingenuous request as villainous, shameful, deceitful. All might have gone well had he not been so impetuous. "*N'i avroiz mal ne vilanie, Por quoi vos gardez de folie*" (vss. 2801-02), Bel Acueil had cautioned the lover while introducing him into the rose's enclosure. And Guillaume's *folie*—here indicative of inordinate haste—is what does him in (vss. 2879-82).

*Folie* in love, as distinguished from unrestrained *rage*, is usually associated in courtly writing with love inferior to *fin'amour*. In the episode we have just examined, the lover is concerned primarily with plucking and possessing the rose; he makes no effort to awaken in Bel Acueil the desire to respond to his sentiments. For that moment, the rose exists only as an object to be enjoyed, and Bel Acueil as a kind of procurer whose purpose is to obtain for him the enjoyment of the rose. The memory of his *folie* (vs. 2955) while separated from the rose puts Guillaume in the same emotional state as the lover in the adventures, alone and lamenting his incompetence.

At this point Reason intervenes. She urges Guillaume to turn from *folie* (vss. 2993-95). "Biaus amis," she exclaims, "*folie e enfance T'ont mis en poine e en esmai*" (vss. 2998-99). And, she continues:

Se tu as folement ovré,  
Or fai tant qu'il soit recovré,  
E garde bien que plus ne croies  
Le conseil par quoi tu foloies.  
Bel foloie qui se chastie;  
E quant juenes on fait folie,  
L'en ne s'en doit pas merveillier.  
(vss. 3011-17)

She goes on to explain that Guillaume's folly comes from love, that love is in fact nothing but folly and as such can be of no use to the world (vss. 3041-45). And, Reason concludes:

Pren durement as denz le frein,  
Si dente ton cuer e refrain.  
Tu doiz metre force e defense  
Encontre ce que tes cuers pense:  
Qui toutes eures son cuer croit,  
Ne puet estre qu'il ne foloit.  
(vss. 3067-72)

Reason asserts that the lover's suffering and grief derive from not seeking her counsel and surrendering to love: "Onques mon conseil n'atendis Quant au deu d'Amors te rendis" (vss. 3057-58). Reason is glossing over a distinction implicit in the fealty Guillaume swore to the god of love. The lover is in fact not a prisoner; he is Love's vassal. To break trust would be *fausseté* (vs. 3091) and *traïson* (vs. 3092), conduct unbefitting a noble vassal. And Guillaume had sworn to abide by his oath: "Je me vueil loer ou blasmer. Au derrenier, de bien amer" (vss. 3093-94). One can therefore love well or badly; the distinction is a qualitative one. The lover must, of course, rise above *folie*, just as he had to pass beyond *rage*. He does so not by eschewing love, but by a better love. To do so he seeks a guide and counsellor: Ami.

Ami counsels patience and perserverance—precisely the qualities lacking when Guillaume first encountered Bel Acueil. And, with the assistance of

Franchise and Pitié, Dangier is mollified and lulled into "courteous" slumber. The lover's more circumspect comportment and the support of Franchise—remember: the very quality making him worthy of becoming Love's vassal—show that his love is no longer *folie*, that he is worthy and safe enough to be near the rose again. Bel Acueil reappears and invites him back into the rose's enclosure. After some delay, the lover asks permission to kiss the rose, a petition politely and courteously made; unwillingly, Bel Acueil declines to grant the request, for fear of Chastity. Thereupon Venus, Chastity's enemy, rushes in to change Bel Acueil's mind.

Venus argues her case first. The lover is too attractive to turn down. Indeed, to grant the kiss would be, not *folie*, but *mesure* (vs. 3468), in her estimation. The *mesure* of love, that is. The appeal is physical, and the emotion still uncontrolled: Bel Acueil is moved to grant the kiss only after Venus applies her firebrand. But uncontrolled love is all too often careless and people find it out, Andreas teaches. *Amor simplex*, based on physical beauty (cf. Venus' description of Guillaume's handsome features) tends to be unrestrained, and therefore the lovers betray their love more easily. Accordingly, Bel Acueil's action is observed by Male Bouche. This time, instead of Reason, Jalosie, a more formidable opponent, aroused by Male Bouche's gossip, rises up to incite the rose's guardians to greater vigilance. Lack of secrecy, and therefore *folie* (however attenuated), is again the cause of the lover's predicament (vss. 3583, 3597). His actions, to Jalosie's way of thinking, are a manifestation of "Lecherie" (vs. 3603) that must be curbed. And so Jalosie walls up the rose and Bel Acueil in a castle. Guillaume is again put to flight by Dangier.

We have now reached the point examined earlier in this paper, where Guillaume summarizes his subsequent adventures, including Love's capture of Jalosie's castle. Let me repeat those lines here to remind you of their content; in reading them, bear in mind what we have learned so far about love and its nature in the *Roman de la Rose*.

Des ore est droiz que je vos conte  
 Coment je fui mellez a Honte,  
 Par cui je fui puis mout grevez,  
 E coment li murs fu levez  
 E li chastiaus riches e forz . . . .  
 (vss. 3499-3503)

This is related in the narrative prior to the abrupt termination of Guillaume's poem; the missing part: "E li chastiaus . . . Qu'Amors prist puis par ses esforz". If we remember that, in Guillaume's poem, Love in its ideal form is not Venus, nor is it Reason, nor the lover's own *folie* or *rage*, then it is revealing of a nice distinction to discover that love alone succeeds in winning the rose—something that no lesser, more imperfect form of what may pass for love could accomplish in any real way. The feudal lord will come to the assistance of his vassal, take Jalosie's castle and deliver the rose to the lover, just as he promised at the conclusion of his instruction.

For Guillaume, ideal love is not foolish. The god of love gave precise instruction to the lover, stressing courtesy, fidelity, perseverance. He also provided consolations, including the counsel of Ami, hope, and other means whereby the lover's cause is advanced and his sorrows assuaged. At the end of Guillaume's narrative, as we saw, hope does appear to promise something more than permanent separation and a Bel Acueil forgetful of her servant.

All this is possible because the god of love himself is not prone to excess. Rather he is

... cil qui les amanz jostise,  
E qui abat l'orgueil des genz,  
E si fait des seignors sergenz,  
E des dames refait baesses,  
Quant il les trueve trop engresses.  
(vss. 868-872)

Love stresses the need to avoid *folie*, demanding willing submission that leads to responsible conduct subject to certain obligations, not enslavement that may produce either the excesses of driven passion or the sudden explosions of momentary freedom.

Tu ne puez vers moi forceier;  
E si te vueil bien enseigner  
Que tu ne puez rien gaaignier  
En la folie n'en orgueil;  
Mais rent toi pris, que je le vueil,  
En pais e debonairement.  
(vss. 1892-97)

And the lover does so.

Sire, volentiers me rendrai,  
Ja vers vos ne me defendrai;  
Ja Deu ne plaise que je pense  
Que j'aie ja vers vos defense,  
Car il n'est pas raison ne droiz.  
(vss. 1899-1903)

And further on:

Tant ai oï de vos bien dire  
Que metre vueil tot a devise  
Cuer e cors en vostre servise.  
(vss. 1918-20)

Love acknowledges the distinctive quality of Guillaume's vow of fealty, and henceforth regards the latter's sentiments as courtly. "Onques tel response n'issi D'ome vilain mal enseigne" (vss. 1930-31). After granting the kiss making Guillaume his vassal, the god of love continues:

Je n'i laisse mie touchier  
 Chascun vilain, chascun bouchier,  
 Ainz doit estre cortois e frans  
 Cil que j'ensi a ome prens.  
 Senz faille il i a poine e fais  
 En moi servir, mais je te fais  
 Enor mout grant, e si doiz estre  
 Mout liez dont tu as si bon maistre  
 E seignor de si haut renon,  
 Qu'Amors porte le gonfanon  
 De Cortoisie e la baniere.  
 (vss. 1937-47)

The very absence of courtesy in the lover's first encounter with Bel Acueil illustrates the distance separating him from complete realization of courtly love.

Si est de si bone maniere,  
 Si douz, si frans e si gentis  
 Que, quiconques est ententis  
 A li servir e enorer,  
 Dedenz lui ne puet demorer  
 Vilanie ne mesprison  
 Ne nule mauvaise aprison.  
 (vss. 1948-54)

The rebuffs Guillaume receives from Dangier show that he must still learn to separate himself from other baser, less reasonable lovers. To do so is to realize in practice as well as in intention a "courtly love". Such love is noble, and thus of and for the court. It becomes thereby self-sufficient, not immediately subservient to foreign standards and demands. The submission of the lover is freely assumed, both parties to the contract recognize certain obligations, privileges, and rights; the relation is thereby in form and language that of vassal to lord, not of slave to master. Both love and the lover are aristocratic, noble, of the court, courtly.

Yet a curious anomaly, or even contradiction, is apparent here. The very lover who seems to have the proper sentiments and the best intentions, and is certainly aware of his obligations to love, turns out to act at the compulsion of other, foreign powers as well. *Rage* as desire impels him to seek to pluck the rose at first sight; yet there seems scarcely any difference in his action after love has begun in earnest, and his haste to pluck the rose is branded *folie*. Venus comes to his aid when he asks to kiss the rose; but she provokes thereby Shame, Fear, Jealousy, and brings on the imprisonment of Bel Acueil. Hardly what we may expect for a courtly lover possessing *maniere*, and who is purportedly *douz, frans, ententis a servir e enorer*. By his folly and by the intervention of Venus, Guillaume becomes villainous in the eyes of others. Yet during these adventures, this period of trial and error, Guillaume uses each mishap to purify and gradually elevate his sentiment.

Thus neither Venus nor the lover alone, but rather Love himself, is to take the castle at the end of the poem. Without even the aid of Venus, it would appear, and thus contrary to Jean de Meun's version of the conclusion—for the latter hardly represents a "fin . . . mout bele"! Whether the poet intended Love to use only the arrows he shot at Guillaume earlier, or some or all of the figures encountered earlier in the Garden of Delight, it is of course impossible to say. Nor does it matter here. It is obvious that Love can call upon only the most courteous and elegant assistance. And this is precisely what Guillaume intended to show in the allegorical narrative of his *Roman de la Rose* "Ou l'Art d'Amors est toute enclose". Only that love associated with courtesy is worthy of the court, and of the name of love. This love alone can overcome Jalousie, win back Bel Acueil, and obtain the rose, without descending to folly or the aid of Venus. It is the keystone of Guillaume's art of love.

This discussion has raised in passing the question of Guillaume's relation to Jean de Meun's continuation and conclusion of the *Rose*. If, as a number of scholars have argued, Jean did in fact continue and complete the poem essentially as Guillaume proposed to continue and complete it, the basic plot (we need not trouble ourselves about Jean's formal digressions, so unlike Guillaume in many ways, since digressions are formally amplifications deriving from and related to the plot), the basic plot should show Love taking the castle of Jalousie—Love being understood, of course, as Guillaume understood it.

But this is not exactly what happens. Love in fact fails to take the castle alone, by storm or siege, or even by treachery and deceit. This contradicts everything implied by Guillaume's fragment. It is Venus who sets the castle on fire, bringing about the grand collapse and the surrender of the rose to the lover. This event transpires after Love and the lover have tried in vain several expedients which, in the context of Guillaume's poem, seem strange indeed. Deceit, hypocrisy, infidelity are employed and recommended in several contexts.

It is not my intention to go into the complex problem of the total signification of Jean de Meun's part of the *Roman de la Rose*. Suffice it to say here that it now seems to me that Robertson and Fleming have put forth the most thoroughly consistent interpretation of Jean's poem (obviously I am not so convinced by their reading of Guillaume), effectively demolishing or shaking to the foundation previous explanations of the poem's meaning. "When Genius throws down his torch at the end of his sermon," writes Robertson, "Venus spreads its flames. That is, the pleasant warmth of Venus which should lead to activities harmonious with Nature is seized upon as the warmth which leads to exactly the kind of desire that causes man to stray from Nature. For when Venus applies her torch, Shame, Fear, and Reason are cast aside [in Guillaume, of course, they are drawn into the action, as we have just seen] . . ., and the lover, although he has no interest in 'multiplication [of the species],' is able to take advantage of the resultant heat to win the rose. Neither Nature nor Genius is responsible for this result,

over which they have no control. The responsibility rests with Cupid and Venus, with desire and pleasure, to which man voluntarily subjects himself as the lover did at the beginning of the poem. The end of the poem is thus simply an elaborate allegorical account . . . of what happens to those who disobey Raison's counsels."<sup>9</sup> This explanation, serious and convincing in its broad lines, must therefore be the starting point for further attempts to grapple with Jean's continuation. However, here I should like to confine myself to one facet of Jean's poem, one that, it seems to me, is not adequately dealt with in Robertson's reading. It is important, because it also clarifies the essential distinction between Guillaume's and Jean's conception of love, something which Robertson denies. It derives from the different conclusions intended for the poems and from the different nature of Love for the two authors. And it supports, I believe, my reading of Guillaume, without leaving out anything essential that would invalidate Jean's meaning and intention as set forth by Robertson in the preceding citation.

Genius, in his discourse to Love's troops, distinguishes sharply between Heaven and Hell, the realm of the good and that of evil, the garden of the rose and the park of the lamb of God he describes for us.<sup>10</sup> On Guillaume's garden in particular, Genius elaborates:

Por Deu, seigneur, prenez ci garde:  
Qui bien la verité regarde,  
Les choses ici [in Guillaume's garden] contenues,  
Ce sont trufles e fanfelues.  
Ci n'a chose qui seit estable,  
Quanqu'il [Guillaume] i vit est corrompable.  
Il vit queroles qui faillirent,  
E faudront tuit cil qui les firent.  
Ausinc feront toutes les choses  
Qu'il vit par tout laienz encloses.  
(vss. 20349-58)

Guillaume's garden belongs to the world outside the park of the lamb, to the world of mutability and death. This is where sin holds sway, and thus, we may assume, all in it is reprehensible. But just what does lie outside the park of the lamb? Jean elaborates on this point, while stressing the close formal resemblance between the two gardens, Guillaume's and his own. In fact there is the same disconcerting combination of elements that one finds in Guillaume. For readers today, it is certainly difficult to place Vieillesse and Pauvreté in the same class as Envie, Avarice, Papelardie, and Haine. But just so, in the world of sin, mutability, and death, we discover not only Hell and its devils; there are also terrestrial things, the four elements, including water and fish, the air with birds, little flies, and butterflies, fire and the bright stars in their spheres. Are fish and fowl, butterflies and the spheres of the stars all in a class with devils? Yes and no. For what Jean is painting for us, in the words of Genius, is the realm of Nature, the "bele chaeine doree Qui les quatre elemenenz enlance" (vss. 16786-87). Jean places Guillaume's



garden in this realm. And it is obvious that what belongs to Nature's mutable realm is not equally bad, or good. One must distinguish.

This is typical of Jean de Meun's tendency to broaden the perspective of Guillaume's poem, both upwards and downwards. Another example. We have seen that it is incumbent upon the lover to cover his sadness by a pleasing, courteous exterior. Is this not a variety of *faus semblant*? But is it for all that hypocrisy? Some might say so, but hardly Guillaume. For Jean's character Faus Semblant comprehends and exemplifies hypocrisy and pretense in a way far removed from the *bel acueil*, the *cointerie* and *envoiseure* of Guillaume's lover. These qualities may, in the last analysis, illustrate "faus semblant", just as both devils and butterflies illustrate the world outside heaven. But the two varieties of *semblance* in, respectively, Guillaume and Jean, are not morally equivalent, or even socially on the same level as varieties of "courteous seeming" in an aristocratic society. The intentions are different. Guillaume's lover is striving to be worthy of his lady's love; Jean's is using Faus Semblant as a means to seduction. Similar broadening, deepening, and moral shading is evident in the two authors' treatment of Reason, Ami, la Vieille. It is also apparent, in a most disconcerting way, in Jean's own representation of Genius, who, in succession, serves as Nature's priest, an apostle of restless copulation, Jean's mouthpiece in describing the park of the lamb, and the agent bearing Venus' firebrand among the troops of love!<sup>11</sup>

The explanation for such apparent contradictions, and the key to the different intentions of the two authors, is found in the role Jean assigns to Venus. In Guillaume, we have seen her as an episodic figure, another false start for the lover desirous of winning the rose. Nowhere in evidence in Guillaume's poem in any remarkable way prior to the single, spectacular moment when she sets her firebrand to the seat of Bel Acueil's pants (she is alluded to before only once in passing as the enemy of Chastity, for whom Shame and Fear were created by Reason), she disappears as soon as Bel Acueil allows the lover to kiss the rose. There is no indication that she is to play a part in the conclusion of the poem, where Love is to take the castle.

It is obvious that this contrasts remarkably with Jean's conclusion. There Love and the lover are powerless before the castle. Only Venus can capture it.

Unlike Guillaume, Jean de Meun does not let us forget Venus hovering constantly in the wings throughout his 18,000 lines. There are frequent and varied allusions to her power and role, almost from the beginning of the continuation. Sometimes she is associated closely with Love, sometimes not. Jean makes it explicit that his conception of how the poem should end does not coincide with Guillaume's because of Venus' part in the action. Rather than have the castle fall to Love alone, "Sachez," Jean makes Ami exclaim,

Li deus d'Amours ja n'i faudra,  
Quant le fort chastel assaudra,  
Qu'il ne vous rende sa promesse;  
Car il e *Venus* la deesse

Tant aus portiers se combatront  
Que la forterece abatront;  
Si pourreiz lors cuillir la rose,  
Ja si fort ne l'avront enclose.  
(vss. 8249-56)

And the rose will be plucked (vss. 10599-602). That is precisely what transpires in rather less veiled language in the poem's final lines.

Gui de Mori's treatment of vs. 3504 is useful in demonstrating the diverse intentions of Guillaume and Jean, and how these were evident to one of their near contemporaries. Gui had copied and to a certain extent reworked Guillaume's poem before he came to know Jean's. After discovering and reading the latter, he rewrote his adaptation, to make it coincide more closely with the new poem. The critical line 3504 in Guillaume he left unchanged in his original version; but after adding Jean's continuation he changed it to read: "*Que Venus prist par ses efforts*".<sup>12</sup> That Gui is perfectly aware of the fact that Jean's conclusion represents a radical alteration of the intention of Guillaume's poem is borne out by several lines appended to line 3504:

A maistre Jehan me voel traire  
De Meun, *ki a autrement*  
*Fait fin sur ce commencement,*  
Et voel chi escrire ses dis  
Selons les singnes deseurdis.<sup>13</sup>

Gui was intimately familiar with both poems. He was certainly aware of what distinguished them. His changes are not fundamental changes in the plan or conception of either poem; he himself asserts that his only desire is to render the poems more pleasant and more readily comprehensible.<sup>14</sup> His alteration of vs. 3504 does just that. And it is supported by a close reading of Jean's continuation.

First, Love is not always so eager as one might think to enlist Venus' aid; that is because their activities and spheres of influence do not coincide. Love is reluctant to call upon her assistance at the beginning of the siege because

. . . ma mere la deesse,  
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.  
N'est pas dou tout a mon desir,  
N'en faz pas quanque je desir.  
(vss. 10749-52)

This is because Venus' field of action extends to prostitution and other forms of sexual activity wherein "love" as such plays no part (vss. 10765-826). She allows infidelity (vss. 13038-42) and is indifferent to secrecy, except for momentary tactical advantage (vss. 20751-64). But there are varieties of love that do not include Venus because of her very excesses. There is a reasonable sort of love, proposed by Reason herself, a fact all too often

overlooked (vss. 4546-62). This is not the same love Reason proposes afterwards—love for Reason it-, or her-, self—and rejected by the lover outright.<sup>15</sup> Venus also scorns conjugal love and mocks marital fidelity (vss. 14031-38). But Jean does not make much of reasonable love or conjugal love; his lover is only too willing, despite Love's hesitations, to accept Venus' aid. Jean's conclusion, ironic, indicative of man's debasement when he eschews reasonable conduct for Venus' sake, is not Guillaume's conclusion.

Jean's poem and Guillaume's are at once readily comprehensible and consistent in themselves, and yet fundamentally different in perspective. Neither author favors subtle or ingenious argumentation and elaboration; there are no hidden meanings or esoteric doctrines to unshell carefully and laboriously. Both do demand an attentive public, and seek to make the presentation of their thought as clear, as forthright, and as pleasing as possible. Jean, whose compositional manner might at first make one suspicious of this generalization, has Nature say in one place:

Qui bien voudrait la chose emprendre,  
 Qui n'est pas legiere a entendre,  
 Un gros essemble en pourrait metre  
 Aus genz lais, qui n'entendent letre,  
 Car teus genz veulent grosse chose,  
 Senz grant soutiveté de glose.  
 (vss. 17391-96)<sup>16</sup>

This implies a non-clerical but alert audience. The essential difference between the two is the method they employ to set forth their matter. Guillaume describes directly a courtly love, as I have explained that term earlier, wherein imperfections and impurities—Reason opposed to Love, Venus as elemental passion, Dangier, Jalosie, and others—are rejected or overcome. In Jean de Meun, however, there is a more ironic, almost parodistic reversal of values that leads to the at once climactic and anticlimactic act, not of love, but of Venus. "Ainsinc va des contraires choses," Jean's lover comments,

Les unes sont des autres gloses;  
 Et qui l'une en veaut defenir,  
 De l'autre li deit souvenir,  
 Ou ja, par nule entencion,  
 N'i metra diffinicion;  
 Car qui des deus n'a quenoissance  
 Ja n'i quenoistra diferece,  
 Senz quei ne peut venir en place  
 Diffinicion que l'en face.  
 (vss. 21573-82)<sup>17</sup>

This "definition" of love by its opposite—Venus rampant—forms a striking and deliberate contrast to Guillaume's ideal, and made it impossible for Jean to keep the conclusion proposed in vs. 3504: to have Love alone take the

castle of Jalousie and reward his faithful vassal as he promised when the latter swore fealty to him. Jean made the necessary changes to suit his intention, and Gui de Mori followed suit in amending vs. 3504. Yet Guillaume's original reading remains consistent with his poem as we have it now. It also promises the realization of that ideal love described by the god of love himself in the instruction central to Guillaume's poem: a courtly love, the only kind worthy of winning Bel Acueil, the rose—and that Rose alluded to in the prologue, who is most certainly *not* the Virgin Mary!

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## NOTES

1. The edition cited is that of Ernest Langlois in the SATF, vols. 1-5. I have also consulted that of Félix Lecoy, for the CFMA, vols. 1 and 2; the third volume did not appear in time to be used for this paper. I wish to express my thanks to Mary Ann Burke for her assistance in the preparation of this paper.

2. See, for example, vss. 691-700, 978-984, 2060-76, as well as 3499-3510 here.

3. See Alan M. F. Gunn, *The Mirror of Love: A Reinterpretation of "The Romance of the Rose"* (Lubbock, Texas, 1952); D. W. Robertson, Jr., *A Preface to Chaucer* (Princeton, 1962); John V. Fleming, *The "Roman de la Rose"* (Princeton, 1969); Charles Dahlberg, "Love and the *Roman de la Rose*," *Speculum*, XLIV (1969), 568-584.

4. His hope rests on Bel Acueil's fidelity; see vss. 4047-58.

5. Cf. Lionel J. Friedman, "Gradus amoris," *Romance Philology*, XIX (1964-65), who, from different evidence, concludes "that the work was approximately four-fifths completed, in regard to the narrative line, when Jean de Meun undertook to conclude it" (p. 175).

6. Pp. 93-94. Fleming fails to perceive the distinction made by Guillaume, despite the fact that a marginal comment by one illuminator gives the right reading; see p. 95, and specifically fig. 23.

7. On these categories, see D. Kelly, "Courtly Love in Perspective: the Hierarchy of Love in Andreas Capellanus," *Traditio*, XXIV (1968), especially pp. 121-128.

8. A similar separation between knowledge and understanding occurs in Guillaume de Machaut's *Remede de Fortune*. The lover knows, when he composes the *lai*, what is appropriate to *fin amour*; yet he does not learn to act on that knowledge until he comes to know Esperance (personified) by experience.

9. P. 202. This passage expresses the burden of Fleming's interpretation; cf. also Rosamond Tuve, *Allegorical Imagery* (Princeton, 1966), p. 237.

10. Fleming regards this passage as serious, though his interpretation of its intent differs from mine; see pp. 220 and 224. Cf. also Friedman, "Jean de Meun, Antifeminism, and 'Bourgeois Realism,'" *MP*, LVII (1959-60), 17. One should also consult the important article by Winthrop Wetherbee, "The Function of Poetry in the 'De planctu Naturae' of Alain de Lille," *Traditio*, XXV (1969), 87-125.

11. See the excellent analysis by Fleming pp. 197-201.

12. Marc-Rene Jung, "Gui de Mori et Guillaume de Lorris," *Vox romanica*, XXVII (1968), 109.

13. *Vox romanica*, 108 (emphasis mine). There is nothing in the 78 line conclusion (which Gui de Mori knew) appended to Guillaume's text in some manuscripts that would call for changing *Amours* to *Venus*; see Langlois, II, 330-333.

14. *Vox romanica*, 112.

15. Here I differ with those who equate the two. Raison's words, in context, are perfectly clear: she is talking about love between lovers "cil et cele, Quel qu'ele soit, dame ou pucele" (vss. 4547-48), and distinguishing them from goldiggers and from those who seek only "carnal delight," fear pregnancy, or do not truly love. As to the last point:

Ne cuidiez pas que jes dessemble:  
Je vueil bien qu'il aillent ensemble,  
E facent quanqu'il doivent faire,

Come courteis e debonaire;  
Mais de la fole amour se gardent  
Don li cueur esprennent e ardent;  
E seit l'amour senz couveitise,  
Qui les faus cueurs de prendre atise.  
Bone amour deit de fin cueur naistre;  
Don n'en deivent pas estre maistre  
Ne quel font corporel soulaz.

Nothing up to this verse is inconsonant with Guillaume.

Mais l'amour qui te tient ou laz  
Charneus deliz te represente. . . .  
(vs. 4589-4601)

She thus contradicts in advance La Vieille's teaching; see Gunn, p. 387, and Friedman, *MP*, LVII, 16. Cf. also Hans Robert Jauss, *La littérature didactique, allégorique et satirique*, in: *Grundriss der romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters* (Heidelberg, 1969), VI, 1, 237. The distinction appears in Andreas as well; see A. J. Denomy, "The *De Amore* of Andreas Capellanus and the Condemnation of 1277," *Mediaeval Studies*, VIII (1946), 109-110; Kelly, *Traditio*, XXIV, 131-132. Here Raison is acting very much as she will in Thibaut's *Roman de la poire*: as an aid and counsel for reasonable love, encouraging the lover to avoid base sentiments and desires on the one hand, without forsaking *fin amour* on the other. See *Li Romanz de la poire*, ed. Friedrich Stehlich (Halle, 1881), especially vss. 2016-2251.

16. It is important to bear this statement in mind while reading Jean's poem. There may indeed be a learned tradition of great complexity, and with subtle and numerous ramifications, behind his poem, and the more learned segment of his public would doubtless have appreciated his adaptation of prior thought. But it is not necessary to limit Jean's public to this group, as Fleming seems to do (p. 225). One can read and appreciate the poem without so much learning; at least, the lines cited here indicate that Jean thought so. See as well Gérard Paré, *Les idées et les lettres au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Montreal, 1947), p. 311; Alberto Várvaro, *Struttura e forme della letteratura romanza del medioevo* (Naples, 1967), I, 48; and Tuve, p. 263 note. On page 273, however, Tuve suggests that this passage may be an ironic cover-up. It still can reflect the real capacities of Jean's general public. A similar device occurs in Gervais du Bus' *Roman de Fauvel*, ed. Arthur Langfors, SATF (Paris, 1914-19), vss. 2574-78. Gervais knew Jean's poem; see vss. 1597-98.

17. Cf. Erich Auerbach, *Typologische Motive in der mittelalterlichen Literatur*, Schriften und Vorträge des Petrarca-Instituts Köln, II (Krefeld, 1953), p. 27; Tuve, p. 261; and, in general, Paré, pp. 31-32.

# Movement and Montage in Villon's *Testament*

NORRIS J. LACY

Northrop Frye has defined two opposing points of view from which we can consider literary form. "As shaping principle, it may be thought of as narrative, organizing temporally" the matter of the poem. "As containing principle it may be thought of as meaning, holding the poem together in a simultaneous structure."<sup>1</sup> Although Frye insists that the form of a poem, like musical form, is the same whether it is considered as stationary or as moving through the work, these two viewpoints may not yield equally successful results when applied to a specific text.

The first problem confronting the formalist who undertakes a study of Villon's *Testament* appears to be not that the poem has no discernible structure, but that it has too many. It is clear that Villon uses a number of organizational systems, and there are correspondingly a number of legitimate structural approaches. One critic has proposed structural divisions of the poem based on the succession of dominant themes; other examinations might concentrate on patterns of imagery or on symmetrical arrangements of the interpolated lyric pieces.<sup>2</sup>

In the case of the *Testament*, analyses of the "containing principle" tend to be unsatisfactory, because the structures of the work are not only multiple but elusive. Such analyses typically look for a form which is apparent throughout the poem, and this approach fails precisely because Villon's method of composition involves the systematic violation of systems and patterns which have been established.

It must be pointed out, however, that this formal complexity is an accurate reflection of what is happening within the poem. Just as the poet introduces themes which appear, develop, and fade into the background, so does he tend to set up patterns, develop them for a time, and abandon them. Moreover, the repeated violation of structural patterns parallels Villon's repeated contradiction of his own poetic premise—his narrator's attempt at contrition. Such structural techniques are dictated by the character of the poem: formal consistency is incompatible with the design of the *Testament*, a design which includes the illusion of spontaneity.

If the structure of the poem reflects the poetic techniques which form it, a more productive critical approach should be the examination of the internal narrative, temporal, and thematic development of the *Testament*. The form of the poem will then be seen as movement, as the psychological structure of the narrator's thought. Such an analysis will reveal less the "shape" of the work than its internal energy and motion, and the precise techniques underlying and animating Villon's poetic vision.

The mock testament was a recognizable genre but in no way a rigid one,

and Villon was thus able to give free play to his ironic imagination. Furthermore, he could control the form of the work easily enough by manipulating the order of his bequests. Yet, the testament was nonetheless a non-narrative form, to which Villon succeeded in adding movement, tension, and progression. The extraordinary life of his poem is due in part to the application of two animating principles. The first is the establishment of a system of themes and movements which develop throughout the poem and converge at a single point near its end. The second principle we may designate as montage: the juxtaposition of the narrator's contradictory attitudes, the rhythm of his shifts in attitude, and the acceleration of this rhythm. These are among the most prominent of his numerous compositional principles.

The simplest and most natural development in the work, and the one on which many of the others depend, is the aging of Villon himself.<sup>3</sup> He is not on his deathbed at the beginning of the *Testament*; on the contrary, he appears to be more concerned with the circumstances and conditions of his life than with the approach of his death. He tells us that he is "foible . . . trop plus de biens que de santé"<sup>4</sup> and makes subsequent references to his own future. Particularly significant is his resolve to continue humbling himself before Louis as long as the King lives (vss. 85-87).<sup>5</sup> And despite the first references to his physical condition (vss. 89-96), he points out that God does not wish him to die (vss. 105-106) and even mentions his relative youth (vss. 119-120). It is apparent that the *Testament* is not at the beginning a document urgently dictated by a man on the point of death. The thought of death clearly troubles him, but for the moment it is no more than that; a man haunted by fear of death has after all no time to experiment with ballads written in *vieil langage françois* or to write about death in abstract or philosophical terms. However, Villon very soon begins to speak of his failing health and approaching death, and as the poem progresses these subjects rapidly become his obsessions. The *Testament* is thus the record of the approach of death and the progressive deterioration of the narrator's health. The development of this theme is paralleled by the change in his use of the word "pauvre": the word appears to carry more than one meaning throughout the work, but at the beginning he considers himself "poorer in wealth than in health" (vss. 73-74), whereas the same word used at the end refers not only to poverty but also—and principally—to his health and to the human condition. Starting from his determination to go on living, we follow him to the point of death. Indeed, in a sense we follow him even further, as the narrator projects himself beyond the grave to imagine and describe the events of his death.

This progression to and beyond death dictates a corresponding evolution of the narrator's temporal point of view. The beginning of the work is narrated principally in the past tense, with the digression on Thibault and references to the earlier composition of the testament ("J'ay ce testament tres estable / Faict": vss. 78-79). The central portion, the testament proper, is of course written in the present. Although the end of the poem is

again given in the past tense, it is in reality the future which is being narrated. Thus, the progression of tenses (past to present to an implied future) supports the passage of time indicated in the poem. Moreover, this technique functions also as a method of amplification, as Villon's flashbacks and projections into the future open the work up to encompass not just his last will and testament, written ostensibly within a short time, but most of his life and his death as well.

Two other techniques which contribute to the sense of movement and direction are an evolution within the "*pièces données*" (the lyric pieces inserted into the work) and a corresponding evolution of Villon's imagery. While the progression from the beginning to the end is not clear and uninterrupted, we can discern a steady movement in a predictable direction. Like Montaigne, Villon himself is the subject of his book, and all his themes and topics, whether they begin with the past, the abstract, or the general, eventually come back to the present, the precise, the particular—in short, to Villon himself.

We have no difficulty following the general development within the lyric pieces of the *Testament*. It is no accident that the *Ballade des dames du temps jadis*, the first of a group of three ballads concerning the past, is at the same time the first poem in the *Testament*. This *ballade* combines the two principal themes which Villon will treat in detail—women on the one hand, death and the ravages of time on the other. Moreover, this poem and the two that follow are a relatively abstract and idealized treatment of the themes, taking its illustrations from the past. Neither characteristic will be found later in the poem, where the style we tend to associate generally with Villon involves an unflinchingly realistic treatment of the present. The last ballad in the *Testament* to deal specifically with women is the *Grosse Margot* poem, interestingly placed as many verses before the end as the *Dames du temps jadis* is after the beginning; after it come only the ballad *Tout aux tavernes et aux filles* and the poems on Villon's death. In the movement from the first ballad to the *Grosse Margot* the poet gives us the Hëaulmiere section (pictures of both recent past and present), the poem for his mother (in the present), the ballad for Robert d'Estouteville (in the present but in the courtly lyric style), and finally a series of vignettes of women, Paris, and his own life.

This evolution is not limited to the *pièces données*; there is also a general progression of the imagery of the poem, from the abstract to the realistic. For example, the subject which Villon treats in the first ballad recurs a number of times in the *Testament*, but nowhere more vividly than in this meditation on the skulls in graveyards. Instead of considering the effect of time on ladies from the past, or even on the present *filles de joie*, Villon now treats the theme by reference to heads "*qui s'enclinoient / Unes contre autres en leurs vies*" (vss. 1752-53), and which are now skulls shoveled together in piles, their bodies rotted. Finally, we can observe a related evolution in the bequests; they begin with the Virgin and with Villon's *plus que pere*, and there is a descending hierarchy concluding, as David Kuhn points out, with sections treating "*de la racaille, des malades, des morts, et de Villon mort.*"<sup>6</sup>



One effect of these techniques is the decreasing clarity of form appropriate to the *Testament*, but at the same time they all function together to impart to the reader an impression of extraordinary movement. In effect, Villon zeroes in on himself and his surroundings. Compressing much of his life into a brief text, he proceeds from the past to the present, from a meditation in the high style to a portrait in the low style, from the general to the particular, and from an abstract or idealized treatment to a realistic, personal one. The poem about Margot is his final explicit statement about women (except for his remark that they are in part the cause of poverty: vss. 1692-1719). The other of his great themes, death, is carried on to the end and is made as personal as possible; he began by writing *about* death, and he is ending by reacting *to* it. Thus death, which some 2000 verses before had been responsible for the disappearance of feminine beauty in times past, now claims the "pauvre Villon."

So far, I have traced Villon's compositional technique as he establishes a number of poetic or thematic "lines" in his work. These lines, like his digressions, tend to wander here and there, sometimes without apparent direction; yet they steadily make their way to converge at a point near the end of the *Testament*. The poetic effect of this convergence is a focusing (again, a "zeroing in") on that point—Villon just before or at death. Yet, this technique alone is not sufficient to explain the concentration and tension which a sensitive reading of the work produces. Rather, we should look at a second principle which complements the movement I have discussed; this principle we may designate as montage and identify as a dramatic and rhythmic technique. In this part of my discussion I borrow the terminology of Sergei Eisenstein.<sup>7</sup> This is not so much the application of filmic theory to poetry as it is simply the borrowing of a convenient critical vocabulary, even though Eisenstein insists that montage is a technique practicable in all the arts. In fact, he sees Flaubert as the real master of this effect. According to Eisenstein, montage is characterized by collision and conflict (p. 37); it is ". . . an idea that arises from the collision of independent shots," a juxtaposition of independent, even opposing images or ideas (p. 49; see also pp. 72 ff.). The application of the theory of montage to Villon's work is apparent.

The statement that there are in a sense two main protagonists in the poem (Villon-*sage* and Villon-*follastre*, or *cuer* and *corps*) is of course a commonplace, but it is an accurate one. The conscience of the narrator is in conflict with his passions and tastes, just as in the *Debat du cuer et du corps*. Quite naturally, it is his conscience which is dominant at the beginning of the poem (for it is that side of Villon which intends to draw up his testament and later to prepare for his death). We should realize, however, that with Villon conscience is less a moral than a pragmatic consideration. Perhaps for that reason, he is unable to sustain his initial attitude for any length of time; in fact, the first digression (on Thibault) begins in the very first *huitain*. Thus, the *Testament* juxtaposes two contradictory attitudes within the narrator himself; we can follow the conflict throughout the work, as first one attitude,

then the opposite one, asserts itself. Such montage is, as Eisenstein points out, a dramatic principle, and indeed, there are in a sense two characters who are in constant conflict with each other.

However, while simple montage provides a structure and a dramatic effect, it becomes a rhythmic technique only when it is modified and manipulated by the poet. Here we return to Eisenstein for his definition of tension and rhythm. Tension is the conflict between an established tonality or system and the departure from that system. The tension increases as the interval of departure widens. Finally, rhythm is defined as the phases of the tension; that is, the alternation tonality-discord-tonality-discord (pp. 47-48).

The tonality which Villon establishes in the poem is the contrite attitude of a man preparing his testament. But no sooner is this system or tonality established than it is violated, and it is the narrator's inability to sustain this attitude which gives rise to tension. There is a conflict between his desires and his conscience, but equally significant is the fact that Villon progressively increases this tension as the poem develops. Throughout the first part of the work, we see a number of shifts in attitude, which are in effect departures from Villon's established system. Yet these departures, beginning with the passage concerning Thibault, do not negate the system; they are simple digressions, however violent they may be. His regrets for his lost youth and his thoughts on time, age, and death end in the three ballads on the subject (*Dames and Seigneurs du temps jadis, ancien françois*). Only after some 420 verses do we see clearly the other side of his character: "Mais que j'aye fait mes estrenes / Honneste mort ne me desplaist" (vss. 419-420). He seems to accept the inevitability of death, but he also affirms his love of life and pleasure, a love which is to become increasingly prominent. In the testament proper he begins by what appears to be a genuinely contrite spirit and gradually moves to a spirit of rebellion against death as well as against those who have incurred his wrath. The lay *Mort, j'appelle de ta rigueur* expresses his refusal to be reconciled to death, but then this side of the poet disappears until after the courtly ballad for Robert d'Estouteville, when he once again refuses to accept his fate. Then, in the obscenely vituperative ballad of the *langues envieuses*, all his bitterness bursts forth once more, and from here on it will be apparent at nearly every point, as his passions and rebellious side are in constant and increasing conflict with his penitent spirit. There are two significant points here: first, that the deviation from the contrite spirit becomes increasingly marked; and second, that as his death approaches the alternation of the two points of view becomes more and more rapid toward the end. Thus, Villon not only increases the tension but also accelerates the rhythm of the *Testament*. The narrator asks for *repos eternel* and immediately repeats his appeal for life (vs. 1902). He makes another effort to put his life in order and prepare for death in the ballad *Je crie a toutes gens mercis*, but he can sustain this attitude for a mere two stanzas before he interrupts himself, and with the word *sinon* (vs. 1984) his attention abruptly turns to those for whose pardon he does *not* care. The final ballad begins in the solemn tone of the testament, only to have that tone

negated in the *envoi* by the final affirmation of life, pleasure, and the passions.

The tension in the *Testament* is due, as I have said, to the conflict between the two sides of the narrator and between the opposing sides of life which they represent. As we make our way through the work, Villon in his digressions and diatribes moves farther and farther from the tone and ideas proper to a testament. That is, in Eisenstein's terms, the interval of his departures from the established testament system becomes larger and larger, providing greater tension as we approach the end of the work. The tension is supported as well by the simple acceleration of the rhythmic shifts of point of view. In concrete terms, Villon's attitudes suggest a pendulum which swings faster and farther each time. Finally, this acceleration is reflected in the increasing frequency with which lyric pieces are inserted into the work. The first ballads come after forty-one strophes, and then at shorter and shorter intervals. This motion is briefly reversed when Villon begins his bequests—another forty-one stanzas precede the next lyric—but then resumes and is brought to its logical conclusion in the cluster of five ballads, coinciding more or less with the point of convergence of the developmental lines I discussed earlier.

In writing the *Testament*, Villon succeeded in transforming a basically static form by adding movement and tension. To do so, he first simply added digressions and the narrative account of his death. But he also developed the poem in such a way that thematic and structural lines converge at the end, just as the acceleration of rhythmic movements produces a concentrated attention on the end of the poem and the end of the narrator's life. Of the many possible structural approaches, the analysis of the techniques of movement and montage seems to me most successful in explaining how the poet shaped his work progressively from beginning to end to produce the masterpiece he has left us in the *Testament*.

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## NOTES

1. *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, 1957), p. 83.
2. For the analysis of thematic "waves," see Richard Terdiman, "The Structure of Villon's *Testament*," *PMLA*, 82 (1967), 622-633; on the arrangement of lyrics, see David Kuhn, *La Poétique de François Villon* (Paris: Colin, 1967), esp. pp. 375-378.
3. As with all works involving a narrator and an author with the same name, it is essential that the two not be confused. In this paper, I think it is clear in each case which one I am referring to, and I make no systematic attempt to designate them as "poet" and "narrator." I might add, however, that this question (which I intend to consider in a future study) is particularly intriguing and challenging in Villon's case. The reason may be partly that many critics have confused the two (Villon himself may have been ill or dying at the time, but we cannot know that from reading the text; nor does that tell us anything essential about the text). The primary problem is however the fact that the narrator, like the poet, is engaged in writing, and both the testament and the digressions are presumably his, just as he is the creation of the poet. This makes the separation of author and narrator indistinct and raises important questions, which cannot be examined here, about point of view, irony, and reliable narration.
4. Vss. 73-74; subsequent line numbers are given in the text. Reference is to Auguste Longnon's edition of Villon's *Oeuvres*, 4th ed. revised by Lucien Foulet (Paris: Champion, 1961).

5. The verse reads: "Ce que feray tant qu'il mourra" (vs. 87). A number of commentators have pointed out the ambiguity in this line; is reference to the King or to Villon's heart? I doubt that the ambiguity can be resolved, and furthermore I suspect that Villon knew precisely what he was doing. At any rate, my primary interpretation is supported by the other references to his age and thoughts on life and death.

6. Kuhn, p. 411.

7. *Film Form and The Film Sense* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1957).

# Appendix

## A Note on the Universality of the *Testament*

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In the preceding essay on "movement and montage," I discussed Villon's shift from the general to the particular, or from the universal to the concrete, and I justified it primarily as a method of concentrating attention on the real subject of the poem; that is, the mind of a man coming face to face with death.<sup>1</sup> A contrary view is expressed by David Kuhn, who insists that the last part lacks the interest of earlier sections, and he considers it natural that a reader's attention should wane in the course of the work.<sup>2</sup> This is a point which we have to grant only if we concede that the poem can be excerpted or that one portion can be judged without recourse to the entire work.<sup>3</sup> It is true, as Kuhn contends, that the last part of the poem lacks the lyrical appeal of the first half. Moreover, he points out the less general character of the end; he speaks of ". . . le récit des événements d'une signification générale moins marquée, le détail d'une vie désormais privée de tout devenir lyrique, les mille petites vengeances et commérages d'un homme persécuté" (p. 346). The question is thus whether the particularity of the end of the poem is in fact a poetic flaw. While the first half of the poem develops certain themes (the flight and ravages of time) which are sufficiently general to be applicable to other men and other ages, it can be argued that the poem and its narrator achieve also a different kind of universality, which would not be possible without the individualizing and particularizing techniques employed in the second half.

I am of course referring to a phenomenon similar to the "concrete universal" proposed by W. K. Wimsatt as a response to the paradox of poetry, which is by nature general or universal, even though it deals with the particular.<sup>4</sup> Wimsatt contends that great poems belong to a class which are in some curious way both specific and general. We might also follow John Crowe Ransom in supposing that the *argument* of the poem provides a universal structure, which is filled out by a specific *texture* of irrelevant detail. That may apply in part to Villon: the argument concerns the fundamental struggle (admittedly universal) between the conflicting sides of human character. Yet, it seems to me that Villon is a special case, for he has created not only some notable themes but also a narrator who appears to be universal in a different sense, without being a recognizable type, as is, for example, Tartuffe. With Villon, I suggest that we are dealing with two kinds of universality. The distinction will be clear if we can think of "universal" as meaning that which has an existence not dependent on a particular time,

place, or context. Thus, we see that Villon's "argument" and his general themes are universal, if we accept them as being generally applicable outside the poem. On the other hand, my definition also includes anything which is so concrete and so thoroughly defined that it assumes a certain independence of its precise context.

Villon adds detail to specific detail about himself and his situation, and as a result the poem and its narrator are too precise and concrete to be considered properly as types. If we accept Kuhn's judgment of the *Testament*, we might claim for Villon a number of poetic pieces which should be preserved, but the character he creates and the rest of the poem would be forgotten. But if we follow carefully the internal development of the poem, we see that Villon particularizes his subject until its concreteness gives it the substance and power necessary to detach itself from its historical and literary context and maintain (at least metaphorically) an independent existence.

The movement and evolution of the poem are thus justified on grounds which are not merely structural. A poet moving from the particular to the general opens his work up to multiple interpretations, but his characters can easily be lost in the process. Villon's method is the opposite; he first creates themes of general import, and then he leaves the general to create something remarkably vivid and precise.

To evaluate a work, we have to consider its form as carefully as its narrative content. In the *Testament*, all the formal techniques I have discussed seem to me to be designed to produce precisely the effect which Kuhn criticizes. The subject of the work is not *death* as much as it is the *narrator's death* (and by extension, the narrator). Villon does treat death first in a general way but then progressively defines and restricts his subject. What he loses in lyrical appeal and generality he gains in intensity, and his structural systems complement the movement of the work toward the concrete and the particular. To contend that in sacrificing the generality of his poem he has committed a poetic blunder is to risk condemning him for not writing as we would like him to write.

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## NOTES

1. A version of this note was incorporated into the preceding essay when it was read at Lawrence; it is more properly an appendix or postscript, and I print it as such here.

2. *La Poétique de François Villon* (Paris: Colin, 1967), p. 346. Kuhn makes the same distinction between the earlier and later works of Rabelais and—curiously—between the two parts of the *Roman de la Rose*, the latter of which he apparently considers dull or inferior.

3. Surprisingly, that is precisely what Kuhn suggests. See p. 344: "... nous ne parvenons pas à concevoir le *Testament* entier comme un seul ouvrage . . . Pour nous le *Testament* est un mélange, un recueil de morceaux choisis. . . C'est-à-dire que nous ne lisons pas ces parties en fonction de l'ensemble qui les inclut."

4. "The Structure of the 'Concrete Universal' in Literature," *PMLA*, 62 (1947), 262-280; reprinted in *The Verbal Icon* (Lexington, Ky., 1954), pp. 69-83.